The Preparation for Christianity

The Preparation for Christianity In the Ancient World

A Study in the History of Moral Development

BY

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New York Chicago Toronto
Fleming H. Revell Company
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

Preface

SCHOLARS who have themselves passed through a similar experience are well aware that the production of a small book of the class to which this belongs is more difficult, in some respects, than the composition of the customary exact academic monograph. Except in an attempt to make the past vivid, these pages lay no claim to special originality. Processes are entirely suppressed, results alone appear. The selection and compression, inseparable from the presentation, have been directed toward rendering the picture as a whole more impressive and less easily mistaken.

For the information of American readers I may add that this little book has been prepared for the Church of Scotland, "Guild Series."[1] The Guild is an organization of the young people of the Church. Among its many admirable activities none is more praiseworthy than the provision of this series of volumes designed to deepen the intelligent interest of the laity in all questions connected with the origin, nature, history, and extension of the Christian religion.

Although no similar organization exists in the United States, so far as I am aware, the numerous colleges and societies connected with the various Churches are well calculated to carry on parallel work. It is in the hope that this sketch may be found useful by their members that I have ventured upon the present issue.

Portions of the fifth chapter are reprinted from *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (London), a magazine far too little read by the Christian community, one containing some admirable studies of aspects of the Jewish faith in all ages.

R. M. WENLEY.

ANN ARBOR, MICH., *January*, 1898.

[1] The series of Guild Text-books are published in America by Fleming H. Revell Company. See list at end of this work.

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The Preparation for Christianity in the Ancient World; A Study in the History of Moral Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."—ROM. viii. 19.

WHATEVER else it may or may not be, Christianity is one of the great historical religions. It centres in a stupendous fact; it was born into a universal empire, the state of which at the moment is matter of history; all the circumstances of the time imperatively demanded the new revelation, and conspired to the successful propagation of the "good news." Accordingly, historical inquiry may be directed to one of two points: either to the Person and Life of the Founder, or to the conditions that prepared the way before Him and speedily, when the immense obstacles are duly weighed, laid the old Roman world at His feet. Consideration of Christ's person and work is an altogether subordinate part of our present purpose, and attention must be concentrated mainly on pre-Christian customs and their meaning. For our problem is:—What were the essential features in the development of man's religious, moral, and social needs throughout the ancient Classical and Hebrew civilizations that ultimately ended in a spiritual impotence curable by Christianity alone?

Obviously, in a study like this, everything turns upon the view of history adopted at the outset. If the past be no more than a series of haphazard occurrences, without inter-relationship and devoid of influences whereto results may be traced, then any discussion such as is now proposed becomes meaningless beforehand. A mere series fails in a deep sense to be a series at all. On the other hand, if the word Providence—old-fashioned as many now deem it—possess significance, if history be a single whole wherein events take their places as parts of a developing organism, and consequences may be read dependent upon numerous incidents that slowly but distinctly lead up to them, then a problem of enormous interest and fertility confronts us. There can be no question that the entire trend of modern inquiry has been in this direction, and, without further parley, its adoption may now be proclaimed. But, by way of introduction, one is compelled to analyze this doctrine somewhat more fully.

Like all other subjects, history has its peculiar presuppositions. At first sight, these naturally appear to be very numerous. Nationalities, with corresponding divisions of territory, are immediately conjured up. Battles and other mighty doings in endless kinds float vaguely through the brain. Fixed institutions, themselves the result of tedious conflict of opinion, occur to one. Man's sufferings and aspirations, his triumphs and disappointments and defeats successively, or together, put in their several pleas for a hearing. The rise and fall of principalities and powers unfold before the eye, or the clash of mighty forces, involving the rupture of momentous empires, breaks thunderously upon the inward ear. Yet after all, these, and such as these, may be summed up in a single and comparatively simple ex-

pression. History exists because man is a social being. Society, in the broadest sense, is its one presupposition. Till men have entered into combinations with one another, history remains unenacted, impossible. Nor can this association be viewed as accidental. No doubt, some few instances of it present unaccountable features; but, nevertheless, association itself furnishes the prime condition under which men act, by a force that cannot be called compulsion, when, as individuals or as groups, they rise to possession of significance worthy the name historical.

We are so wedded now to analogies derived from scientific or quasi-scientific apparatus, that we often find it difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend what precisely "a force that is not compulsion" implies. A man, we say, is the creature of circumstances, whether nearer, like his parents and upbringing, or remoter, like the institutions of his nation and the general temperament of his century. Or, again, we think we have explained him when we call him the child of his time. This idea, seductive by its very ease, fails to find warrant in the facts. If it be abundantly true that "God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours," it is abundantly false to suppose that the "silent moments" are therefore lost or useless. The impression of compelling force so distinctly left upon us by historical movements may be traced to a similar "chronometry." Millions of silent souls there are, have been, and always will be,—only some few strike. And the important fact lies, not in the silence of many and the sonority of some, but in the utterance by the few of the innermost thoughts of the many. "He told me all that ever I did," said the

woman of Samaria, illustrating by this expression one of the profoundest features of universal history. The countless dumb thousands are not lost, for they are the real originators of the ideas voiced by the one. In him these ideas are brought to a point, from him they go forth defined and act with missionary power, transforming all those who recognize them for their own, and insensibly influencing many who have never even heard the doctrine. Now this is possible, nay, eternal, because societies are held together by spiritual bonds stronger far than steel. Even when the groundlings appear to be constrained, they are simply coming into closer contact with the opportunities through which alone they can build up their fullest life. Air and water and mother earth no more hamper the plant than the society to which he belongs hampers the peasant, the laborer, the underling in any sort. Prince and president, prophet and poet, are in very sooth ministers as much as the merest ploughboy. For all must serve in order to arrive at the most meagre kingdom. And why?

The spiritual links of society are not dependent upon intellectual preëminence, nor are they bound up with intimate knowledge of the physical universe. Man forges them out of that distinctive quality of his, the ability to form purposes, to frame ideals. Ideals constitute the warp and woof of society, thus only they are the web of history. Hard as this saying may seem at the first blush, it only expresses one of the most familiar facts in common life. We all live upon purposes. They not only rule us directly, but often exhibit startling power of self-inversion. Is not the road to hell paved with good intentions, heaven won by those most scarred in closest combat with iniquity? Our days, our weeks, our

months, our years, nay, our years upon years, are laid out by us beforehand. On the whole, we intend to realize such and such aims; and in their beginnings all aims are equally ideals. They do not exist in reality, as the saying is, yet they are more real than the solidest things. They do not live simply in the brain; for while they must doubtless be referred to brain-work for their origin, this is immediately reinforced by sentiment for their approval or consecration, and by will for their accomplishment.

But, further, there are ideals and ideals. Our ordinary day-in, day-out designs present for the greater part no insurmountable obstacles to their execution. The same hardly holds true of the larger purposes that control a lifetime or an age, a people or an entire civilization. When I say, I *shall go* to Chicago on Wednesday, or I *shall travel* to Scotland next month, I am sensible that there is a difference in *degree* of difficulty in carrying out the two intentions. But there is a difference in *kind*, a gulf absolutely fixed, between these resolves and others such as those; I shall *try* to write a really great book, or, henceforward, I shall *try* to lead a completely righteous life. We cannot state the two classes of intention with any relative equality of assurance in respect of results. In the former cases, means and end so fit that achievement appears easy, and actually is so. In the latter, an unbridged interval stands between the resolve as conceived and the design as completed—as actually built into life. Now, it is precisely in executing the latter that man affords ever increasingly conclusive proof of his origin. Passing along these higher paths, he grows sensibly into the image of God, bringing forth from the riches of his own soul both the purpose and the mate-

rial to work its realization. For these designs demand a strenuousness, an expenditure of spiritual energy, a militant idealism in short, such as never even enter into the former calculations.

But the reason why history is fashioned out of ideals essentially identical in nature with the latter rather than with the former examples, is simply because these are the controlling forces that originate, nourish, and mould the associations called tribes, nations, and races. And in these ideals all men so associated are partakers, notwithstanding the comparative unconsciousness of the immense majority. Thus, while many seem to be swept along as by an irresistible current, this view of their life is entirely misleading. All that the greatest can render to his age or to his country is, in larger part, a rendering back. Thanks to superior insight, he seizes upon the most salient opportunities offered by his universe, working upon materials that lie equally open to all his fellows, nay, upon materials which they cannot but already share with him. The compulsion to which, as we imagine, the mass lies in bondage is but another aspect under which the same opportunities are expressing themselves. All that is of worth in the career of the most undistinguished person flows from his myriad neighbors; and if he apparently pay more dearly for it than the so-called leaders, it is simply because he obtains less, commonly by his own fault, from the only source whence anything at all is to be gained. It *is* "better to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of sin for ever." Our opportunities are not those of an Armenian, and if we grumble at taxes and tariffs, we are just forgetting for a moment that no opportunity whatsoever can be had in a social vacuum. The thing is a contradiction in fact,—

it never did, it never can, exist. In other words, the compulsion wherein, at first sight, history seems so prodigal is but another name for freedom, for the attendant circumstances in which alone human beings are capable of rising

> On stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

Nowhere, except in a universe of society, can the major ideals be generated, and nohow, except by the means offered in such a universe alone, can an attempt be made to realize them with faintest hope of success. As man is the strongest of created beings by virtue of his sociability, so too, in isolation, he is the most poverty-stricken. Therefore, only in weakness, in dependence, is his strength made perfect. The more he leans upon his fellow-men, the more typically human he becomes; yet the more he lays himself open to the intolerable griefs which misunderstanding and faction and death every day inevitably bring. The spots wherein he may be sorely stricken tend to multiply themselves infinitely as the enrichment of his humanity proceeds. The heartless brute who beats his wife and starves his children, the sensual dog who exists upon momentary pleasure, are indeed under compulsion, if you choose to say so. They are thus driven just because they have decided to be brutes and dogs,—not human beings, who live their truest life when they are apprehended of some vision from a better world which they strive, amid many discouragements, to realize in common workaday tasks. This very striving it is that makes these strenuous souls historical. Though subject to manifold disappointments, they stand forth the true potters of permanence,

out of limitation they prove themselves the builders of infinity.

Thus, and only thus, paradox though it be, "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." For we are all creatures *and* sons at one and the same time. As creatures, we recognize ourselves the subjects of numerous restrictions—of body, of mind, and of the society or period into which we are born. As sons of God, on the other hand, we are creators of influential aspirations, and serve ourselves heirs to the immortal achievements of the ages. So, limited though we may be, we look for another country, and hail great men—especially those of our own hour—enthusiastically, because they intimate to us, with a prophecy which we at once recognize as true, the actual presence of this other world in the conditions governing our most prosaic duties, in the sweet relations that render life worth living, in the faiths for which we would die, not because they are true, but because they are ours, seeing that with them we identify our innermost well-being and that of our contemporaries. The pity is, that we so often fail to recognize the sources of their greatness, fail to perceive that these few who have proved all things and held fast to that which is good in our eyes, are in uttermost verity bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Thus we miss the self-sacrifice that is the sole secret of their power, and, whimpering over limitations that must be accepted to be overpassed, still continue to pose as if we alone forsooth were thus unjustifiably cribbed, cabined, and confined. So, almost deliberately, men put away the joys of filling their time and place; for they forget that the time is the present, that the place is here and at hand,

in a vain effort to lay hold upon a time that is not now, and to seize a place which is supposed to be anywhere but near. So, too often, what wonder that life is declaimed against as

> A tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

Unconscious that, in the vast organism of humanity, whereof history is but the outer record, each has his function to subserve, many men remain creatures. Yet, for all this, they cannot renounce their sonship entirely, because, so circumstanced, they yearn the more eagerly for a deliverer. And the deliverer often does come in his own way and in his own good time, setting free the captive and realizing the earnest expectation, not by what he achieves, but by the spirit of his work. For, always and everywhere, the chiefest lesson he can read to the earnestly expectant is, that "all are born to observe good order, few to establish it."

Accordingly, despite our varying terms, that frequently bring dire confusion upon us, every man, be he of a tribe, of a nation, of a civilization or of an age, inhabits a city whose builder and maker is God. He is heir to a spiritual universe, characteristically revealed in its more ennobling ideals—in its religion, in its morals, in its social institutions. But, as human, he cannot remain a mere passive recipient. It is his to be father as well as heir. Yet to this end he must be wed—wed to the opportunities that these very ideals proffer. The parable of the talents is no mere tale, it is of the ultimate essence of all progress. Unconsciously, man is thus ever united to his humane inheritance,—not always

consciously. In proportion as he earnestly expects the manifestation, he is unconscious, and no more than a recipient; in proportion as he contributes to it he is positively a father, and reveals his own sonship in returning something, if not double, for all he has received. In neither case can he escape the unity wherein, by his very existence, he partakes. He is ever attempting to live out the pervading ideals of his spiritual universe, waiting with earnest expectation when he recognizes them not, manifesting them, and himself, when he seeks to realize them. On the one hand a creature, he vindicates his divine sonship on the other. But invariably, creature and son are of one blood, because the universe that both inhabit is the Lord's. The passion for unity—the central idea of the nineteenth century—differs not one whit for the day-laborer and the master of all the poets, for the burdened agnostic, the religious enthusiast and the great scientific discoverer. They but perceive the same principle in different lights. One has it in his trade union; the other sublimates it in his

> God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world!

the third detects it in his "differentiation rising to ever more complex integration;" the next mirrors it in his kingdom of heaven; and the last reads it everywhere by aid of the operative conception of evolution. All know that man has annihilated space and time, that at length toil possesses its reward and the world is one. For all alike the ideal, constituting the universe wherein they live and move and have their being, is the same. Yet no one is an expectant creature in the same sense as any other; no one

a son of God in precise measure with his fellows. By their very contrasts they strongly confirm the disclosure of a single pervasive unity. So it ever has been, so, humanly speaking, it ever must be.

And when we come to look across the spread-out page of history, the records of the past acquire tenfold meaning, and can be intelligently read only in proportion as we are swift to recognize all this. Men have achieved greatness and nations have handed on imperishable things—they have possessed significance in short—solely as they have forgotten to ask, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" and have remembered to seek "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." That is to say, the world has been laid under obligations, that can never be repaid, precisely by those who have been quick to grasp the essential, the ideal, element in the universe they inhabited. Thus alone have all these things —power, fame, permanence in achievement for progress, goodness, vital truth—been added unto them. The greatness of the United States in these last days does not consist in anything material, but in the simple truth—its justification—that it is one of the chief civilizing agencies now operating on this earth. On the other hand, whenever,—their task done or but half completed,—societies have loosened their hold upon spiritual principles, decay, death, and dissolution have overtaken them with awful swiftness. They have passed, but not entirely. For, with that grim irony wherein history so abounds, the very thing that one generation died for or the next disdained has continued to traverse the centuries as an imperishable element in the life of later ages. When the Greek forgot his joy in the

beauteous earth, his matchless artistic cunning fled him; when, in his restless factiousness, he omitted his primary duties to the city-state that had gifted him his all, the kingdom that he once enjoyed vanished into thin air with startling rapidity. When the Jew turned his back upon the higher side of prophetic idealism, his own God forsook His tender care of the chosen nation; when he looked for an earthly Messiah, his race had seeming punishment in the shattering by Roman legionaries, its true reward in the renewal of prophetism, not this time as a far off ideal, but as an accomplished fact—the divinest that history can ever know. So too, after that Roman character had borne immortal witness to its strength by the conquest of half the world, it was warped by the very weight of its own achievements. Yet some relish of the old stock still remained to accomplish subjection of the other half and complete the circle of empire. Then, in her colossal emptiness, Rome swallowed all suggestions and all aids from every quarter of the known universe, took for herself everything that was best, having the while nothing to repay. The primacy thus departed from her, and the magnificent supremacy she had sought by material means set itself down in spiritual shape upon her seven storied hills.

It is indispensable, then, to remember the profound sense in which all history partakes of the character of a gospel. Its every important incident is compacted of ideals, of purposes, that are drawn forth from the unexpressed consciousness of the mass by the greater spirits, whose winged words return to the people irresistibly invoking their allegiance and banding them together ever more closely for ends that no physical eye can see. We of these latter days

profess deep awe at the thought that a word from Queen or Czar or Kaiser can move hundreds of ships and millions of men to the work of destruction. The spectacle that history affords is incomparably more impressive. The imperceptible, the intangible, which we so often count for unreal, has swayed, not specially contrived machines or groups trained with a purpose, but entire nations and whole dynasties from the earliest known past and continuously on through all the eras. Its formative action has not been confined to this or to that, to these or to those, but has appeared ubiquitously in every department of life operating, not so much to maim and to kill and to ruin, as to construct—a labor more difficult beyond compare—to construct, too, all that is most vital and permanent in the heritage of humanity. Thus, there are those among us who, even at this distant date, experience the still living charm of Greek art; or enter with fresh emotion into the sublimities of the Jewish faith; or recognize in the daily blessings of law and order the near presence of Rome's universal sway. Nay, some of us possess inborn affinities for one or other of these ancient orders. Not that we can actually be Greeks or Jews or Romans, but our spirits answer to their several ideals, perceiving that there, and perhaps only there, lies something for the realization of which it is worth while striving in our lives. "We are in connection with the whole universe, as with the future, so with the past. It depends upon ourselves entirely, on the direction we take and the perseverance we show, which of the various influences affect us most." Accordingly, it is impossible for us to forego the study of these old yet ever new matters. And the more we ponder them, seeking to arrive at a just appreciation of

their ultimate meaning, the more we are enabled to see what exactly they were, what happened to be their excellencies and their limitations, what, above all, we owe them and must strive to extract from them. Only thus, too, can we understand why the Christian centuries are evermore separated from the Classical and Jewish as by a mighty chasm fixed, and come to fathom the height and depth of the mystery that is in Christ Jesus. For it is not His mystery, but ours also. The atmosphere of our lives was created by Him, far more completely than the majority of us are even vaguely aware; our institutions have been moulded by His spirit; our most effective ideals centre in Him; and upon His career and all its consequences rests our hope for eternity. These are not opinions, but facts capable of no dispute whatsoever, simply because they are historical, and have been becoming more and more of the essence of history for nigh two thousand years. Consequently, no Christian can have a firmer foundation for his faith than that which rests immovable upon the historical influence issuing from the life of Christ.

The events that at length called imperatively for this influence, the nature of the revolution that rendered it paramount and permanent, are now to pass before us. Surely no more important or profoundly attractive study could be undertaken! Yet its very importance stands in the way of its simplicity. We are bound to confine ourselves to results rather than to processes. For it is of the essence of the matter to strip off the contingent, the momentary, in order to obtain clearer glimpses of the constitutive, the everlasting. Despite this, however, the work is well worth doing, because only by undertaking it can a man hope to arrive at that living interest which

alone will enable him to arrive at a vital understanding of all that the Master accomplished.

In the discussion of these questions it is necessary to begin with the Periclean age of Greece. This starting-point justifies itself, for there man first arrived at some consciousness of his own worth; and, before he had apprehended this, the problems which imperatively called for the reply made by the Christian revelation were practically non-existent.

CHAPTER II

SOCRATES AS A MISSIONARY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

"Know thyself."

Every effort to understand and appreciate the life-work of Socrates is foredoomed to failure if it be not accompanied by dismissal of the habits of thought to which we are accustomed and whereby we inevitably judge all things. Further, this unmaking of our common experience must needs take place chiefly in relation to political affairs. Socrates was a missionary to a certain people, and in his preaching—for he was a preacher as much as a philosopher—the conceptions that ruled Greek society are traceable throughout, exercising paramount formative influence. The defects and the excellencies, like the complete import, of his message are Hellenic and Hellenic only. It would be easy to condemn his morality by applying Christian standards;[1] easy to place him on a parity with Christ, by remembering only his disadvantages and all that he accomplished despite them; easy to read modern speculative notions into his more definite theorizings. But all this and its kind must be rigidly eschewed if we are to view him with any hope of realizing what he actually was and did, of re-living in our own thought the inner workings that led to his wonderful vision, and invested him with such rare, home-thrusting authority.

[1] Cf. Plato's *Symposion*, 223; Xenophon's *Memorabilia* iii. 11.

What sort of place, then, was that Athens whose streets he roamed, whose youth he so profoundly moved,[1] whose leaders were his intimates, whose judges he fearlessly faced, and where he met his doom? When, employing the current phrase, we call it a city, our associations are apt to render our conception of it wrong or distorted in nearly all essential particulars. A modern city, such as New York or Chicago, San Francisco or St. Louis, is, first and foremost, a self-governing municipality; its concerns and powers for rule are, in greater part, parochial—local, not imperial. Favorable situation, traditional callings, or similar causes have aggregated men in it for the purposes of commerce, of administration, of legal advice, of education. Modern inventions and modern discoveries have enabled them best to exploit certain commodities within its compass. Gas and electricity, water and tramways, drainage, street-cleansing, galleries, museums, parks and police supply the leading affairs for which the municipality, as a government, exists. With alliances, peace and war, the customs and the civil services, and other national interests it does not deal. To put it briefly, the city is a secondary political association; indeed, as some understand the term, it is not political at all. For a man's real citizenship centres, not so much in his town, as in his nationality, of which the municipality forms a larger or smaller, a more or less important part. Even when we heighten the colors of the picture and say that, in proportion to population, London is the most important city belonging to any contemporary nationality, this truth is in no degree altered.

[1] Cf. Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades*, iv.; Plato's *Symposion*, 201.

For London is not England, its people are not the English nation. Beyond the town stands what we now call the State. But even this hardly helps us here, because the notion of the state, entertained in some vague way by every one, is at complete odds with the Greek conception. The ramifications of the modern state are so extended, its complexity is so inconceivably intricate, and its functions have become so specialized that the society often seems, in our eyes, to have got the better of its constituent members. No private citizen to-day would be such a fool as to proffer his opinion on the proper mode of designing an ironclad, he would not be so blind to the interests of national defence as to suppose that a ship's armor, cannon, and chandlery could be most satisfactorily settled at the polls. Now, we citizens get over the obvious difficulties here entailed by acquiescing in the appointment of skilled officials who spend their lives in attending to these matters, and who naturally resent undue interference on the part of those who are ultimately their masters, nay, their paymasters. This process extends to all manner of specialized details, and tends to go on expanding till at length we come to regard the state as a thing wherein we have little interest, except on polling days, and to which, on other days, we must for the most part give submission—a submission sometimes rendered not a little unpalatable by "the insolence of office." In this regard the modern state is not merely separated from the individual, but appears to stand over against, if not actually to thwart, him in daily business. Our patriotism is for our country, not for our executive; we eminently fail to associate the policeman with any of our ideals.

Once more, such is the division just indicated

that, even when we come into closer relation with the state, we tend to confuse it, not with the whole body of the people, but, on the contrary, with certain persons, especially with prominent men known to us for their political leanings. "Cleveland" stands for something far more definite than the silent officials at the Treasury; "McKinley" looms larger, and commands incomparably profounder regard than the permanent Under-Secretary of a Department. And so, such is the paradox, on public occasions we hiss the names of men who, were they simple scholars or professors of physics, we should profoundly respect, never dreaming of extending to them aught but the courtesy due to their superior knowledge and ability. Yet we hiss these very men, though they be our fellow-citizens who are accomplishing incomparably more for the commonwealth than ourselves, because we link them with certain doctrines about policy which, little as we may be entitled to an opinion, we do not approve. In other words, just as in the person of the tax-gatherer, we look at the state from the outside, and suspiciously, so in the persons of politicians we view it in an equally external manner, and sometimes with positive hate. In both cases, the distinction between the state and the individual is emphasized, doubtless with dangerous results, and this because modern conditions are of such complex character as to make Aristotle's taking in of the whole state "at a single view" quite out of the question. Plainly, this situation must reveal excellencies, perils, and problems of its own. The point to be persistently remembered is that they are wholly diverse from those developed in ancient Greece. Our city is emphatically not a new Athens, our state is as emphatically not a Hellenic organization. Man

has ceased to be a "political animal," as the Greeks termed him, and his social side has thrown out thousands of new filaments. In the nature of the case he has delegated his *personal* sovereign privileges to those whom he elects, and to those whom his chosen representatives appoint, reserving to himself little more than the right to vote, and to grumble when he considers that this voting has not transformed the world sufficiently to his wishes. Accordingly, he thinks of himself primarily as a man, only secondarily as a citizen. He is ever insisting on his rights, he needs the assessment paper to remind him of his duties, and he takes small trouble to conceal his dislike for this too regular memorial.

The divergence between the Greek and the modern state might be conveyed by saying that the one was an organism, while the other is an organization. Yet, even thus, the constituent material differences remain to be filled in. And one finds it hard, very hard, to realize these now, mainly because our present civic situation affords scarcely any point of departure, much less any conspicuous instance of parallelism. If we could conceive of ourselves as at once electors, members of parliament, departmental officials, and, when our turn came round, policemen, we should be in a fair way to comprehend something of the all-embracing claims and opportunities made and offered by the Greek city-state. The occasional and oft-resented call to serve on a jury is, perhaps, our single point of contact. This constitutes a legitimate claim by the community upon us. Our peers, such is the law, must be judged by their peers, of whose number we are. Now, in its best days—just closing in Socrates' time—this body politic, an organism whereof all were equally members sharing alike duties and rights

yet without marked consciousness of any contrast between them, was an actually realized fact, realized with its full equipment of excellencies and defects in the common life of the men of the day.

Take a modern nation; gather into one of its smaller cities all that is representative in the best sense of the national spirit—statesmen, artists, poets, soldiers, thinkers, scientific workers, and so on; suppose all to be, by the mere fact of their citizenship, active members of the Common Council; imagine them all equally, and with perfect cheerfulness, recipients in rotation of the public offices great and small; transform the duties of the chiefest from the parochialisms of aldermen and contractors to questions of high state policy; infuse all with the incomparable pride that such a city would naturally generate, and furnish them with cultivated leisure by supplying a slave population to provide the means of subsistence; finally, surround them with all that is most splendid in buildings, statues, and artistic ornamentation, suppose the mightiest literary achievements to have sprung from the spirit of their community, give them a religion that is the natural halo of their civic life—present them, in short, with everything that makes for universal culture and tends to foster a justifiable enthusiasm in its conquests, and you will have conjured up, at least in external shape, something like the city-state of Socrates.

Athens was the Athenian's country, the source of his most elevating traditions; his nation, the seat of his most inspiriting conceptions; his church, the guardian of his finest hopes. From Athens flowed the ideals worth living for; the opportunities that, just because he was her citizen, rendered him the highest conceivable type possible for man. On the other hand, his state

claimed his time, intelligence, service—his entire life even—in just compensation for the inestimable advantages bestowed. There were no *men* then, only Athenians. We have, therefore, to reconstruct in imagination a comparatively small[1] and comparatively self-sufficing city. Underneath a brilliant sky, a joyous open-air life was possible, and it was surrounded by everything that could entrance the eye and elevate the spirit. Magnificent temples and other public buildings abounded; statues and sculptures, still even in their melancholy isolation and fragmentariness the wonder and despair of the world, everywhere appeared, not merely as embellishments, but rather as embodiments of the living genius of a living people. Soul-stirring dramas were enacted in the wonderful roofless theatres; poems, perfect masterpieces in their own field, were declaimed before the whole body of the citizens, from whose inmost spirit they had distilled the essential flavor. After a manner which we can barely conceive, ideals shone forth on all sides—ideals proved in the terrific struggle with the barbarian, or living now and here as the characteristic inspiration of the community gradually called forth into ever fresh and varying expression. Yet again, and now in the domain of practical politics, democracy had achieved such realization as it never had before nor is likely ever to see again. The delegation of executive and legislative power to popularly elected representatives which we of to-day term democratic government, was completely unknown. The people did not simply vote at greater or lesser in-

[1] The most reliable authorities infer that the adult population of free citizens at this time was from 30,000 to 35,000.

tervals, they actually governed in their own persons. All could debate the chief questions of state, all would undoubtedly be called at some time or other to serve as public officials. We are aware that, like his neighbors, Socrates acted in such capacities.

But some one may say, "Why, this was a socialistic state." The answer is, Yes and No. It was socialistic in so far as the city demanded service from each and all, and prescribed the relative duties. But these ministerial functions were regarded as a hallowed trust. The citizen never dreamed of any advantage to accrue to him as an individual apart from the common weal. Yet, it was not socialistic in the sense of embodying designs for alteration of the machinery of government so as to fill empty bellies or to find some little leisure for "sweated" workers. Its horizon was never bounded by such material ends, because the whole system stood rooted in a national growth, wherein individual lives found a place ready for them, just as naturally as a limb, an eye, or a tooth. Herein lay its redemption from that "middlingness," that satisfaction with catering for lower aims, which appears as a persistent feature in many recent schemes. For, although the city took a man's life, it rendered him back the sole conditions under which he could achieve the most admirably balanced humanity. Each had his freedom, because all were quick to perceive that only on the excellence of its constituent members can a state be surely based.[1] The result was a galaxy of men of genius hardly to be paralleled in later times, except by the assembled talent of

[1] Cf. Demosthenes, *Aristogeit.* xvii.; Thucydides, ii. 37; Euripides, *Medea*, 825.

the nations representing whole periods, never to be approached by any city, not even by Rome with a universe at her back. Poets and statesmen, sculptors, painters and musicians, orators and philosophers, jostle one another in a bewilderment of ability. So closely knit is the organism that each member can, after a fashion, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature. He stands forth magnified by the surrounding atmosphere of his community,—and this altogether without meretricious assistance. The universal spirit incarnates itself in the individuals, and they, in turn, are capable of being so colossal just on account of the spell that society exercises over them. In losing themselves they find surest personal immortality. For a few brief years this marvellous political ideal, inspired by Greek sanity and moderation, was actual in Athens. Toward the close of that golden age, when the shadows of evening were creeping up the Long Walls, Socrates began to think and to utter his thoughts.

It has been said of him that he was the first of the Greeks who was not wholly Greek, and this statement embodies a profound truth. A people, and especially a people so highly organized as to be fittingly likened to a living thing, remains in the flower of its self-expression only so long as it refrains from reflecting upon its own image, from criticising itself into something more perfect—so long as no ideal utterly beyond its conditions and not to be realized in them, creates disturbance. For a fortunate period, unity with nature, and a homelike joy in the beautiful, mark Greek character. The early thinkers of the race were philosophers only in the limited sense in which we still apply the name to those who pursue pure science. Their desire was to discern the un-

changing, the abiding, not in humanity, but in those ever shifting material phenomena that furnish the most striking accompaniments of life. Deep questions about conduct, about the nature of mind, about God and religion had not occurred to them. They are astonishingly non-moral; and this is but the counterpart of the artistic bent of their nation's genius. So far they were contented with life, for no break between man as he is and man as he ought to be had yet accentuated itself. The

> Little rift within the lute,
> That by and by will make the music mute,
> And ever widening slowly silence all,

appeared first to Socrates, and, for the most part, he was unconscious of the issues wherewith his discovery was fraught. Looking at his time through the perspective of centuries this is now plain to us, and we can also focus the causes that elicited his epoch-making message, "Know thyself."

Three leading changes may be specified as embodying the immediate influences whereto Socrates responded. To produce a complete picture, other and less conspicuous movements would certainly fall to be considered. But these, once more, affiliate themselves upon the main tendencies, to which we now turn for a little.

(1) The old Greek religion, as represented most picturesquely in Homer, was an imaginative rather than an ethical faith. The Hellenes, being at one with the world and with themselves, were fain to rest satisfied with a religion based upon personification. They read themselves at once into and out of the varied natural processes. Consequently, they worshipped gods who ap-

peared, not as abstract qualities like the old Roman deities, but as well-defined people who, in the main, evinced in ideal perfection traits that the Greeks freely recognized for their own. Rooted at first in the nature-worship common to the Aryan stock,[1] religion gradually came to be more and more associated with human qualities. The gods of Olympos, as the legend runs, drove out the elder and less humane deities who begat them. By an imaginative flight, effortless because unconscious, the Hellenic gods assumed clearly marked individual characteristics for the Greek genius. They could be represented, and were, as a matter of fact, artistically bodied forth, with as much precision as men. It was not necessary to torture stone into all kinds of horrible and grotesque shapes in order to symbolize them. Nay, symbolism was not required, because Zeus, Athene, and the rest had lineaments as familiar as those of Pericles or Phryne. In short, nature-worship deepened in inwardness as it lost in multiplicity of material manifestation. Psychological qualities replaced physical events. Valor and wisdom and love stood where lightning and rain and germination had been. The gods came to be with man, not against him.

But, unfortunately, polytheism, or the worship of many deities, each *limited* in a specific way, can never be altered so as to bear the weight of moral attribution which is in its very essence *infinite*. At first the Greeks did not perceive this, but it was inevitable that the perception should awaken sooner or later. What heralded its appearance was, of course, direct reflection upon the conditions out of which moral qualities grow. And these "second thoughts" unavoidably re-

[1] Cf. Homer's *Odyssey*, v. 282.

sulted in a tendency to disparage the traditional deities. For men came to observe, first, that they were as good as their gods,[1] and then they vaguely felt the presence of a spark within their clod revealing possibilities of infinitely greater import than any the gods had to show. This break with the ancient faith followed what we should now deem a strange path. Art wrought its beginnings. The Greek artistic genius immortalized itself in two principal achievements—sculpture and poetry. Sculpture was inspired by, and, one might even say, acted in the interest of, the Olympian pantheon. But Poetry, particularly in the tragedies of Æschylus[2] and Sophocles, departed from the gods as persons, and devoted itself to the setting, development, and resolution of moral problems—of problems implied in the very existence of the qualities wherewith the Greek had *unconsciously* come to gift his deities. By their agency the Hellenic mind was brought into direct contact with ethical questions, and, by reason of the matchless manner in which they were portrayed, took breathless interest in their presentation. So opened the course of reflection that ultimately undermined the authority even of the Thunder-bearer, even of the Guardian of the Mother-city. When Socrates lived, the effects of this process were already keenly felt, especially by those master minds among whom he was so conspicuous.

(2) For about two centuries prior to Socrates, Greek thinkers illustrated the same unconsciousness in regard to ethical questions, and the same sense of unity with the outer world as their na-

[1] Cf. Euripides, *Ion*, 885.

[2] Cf., for example, Æschylus, *Eumenides*, 297; and *Agamemnon*, 367.

tion evinced in the realm of religion. It never occurred to them to investigate systematically the nature of man as a moral being, to inquire into the office and operation of the mental powers, or to ask how the conviction that knowledge is true comes to be generated. Their thought was directed in every case to what is now usually called the problem of substance. That is to say, they sought to discover the one unchanging thing that, despite the endless passing events of the physical world—summer and winter, day and night, seed-time and harvest—remains unaltered and unaffected. This attracted them because, plainly, from it the visible world must proceed, and thereto it must at the last return. Now a problem such as this involves several assumptions which, without satisfactory investigation, are taken for true. It must be assumed, for example, that such a substance does actually exist somewhere; that it lies outside of and in separation from the mind; and that, notwithstanding this division, the mind is somehow or other able to attain true knowledge of it. But, unfortunately, all this is tantamount to supposing that the most fundamental questions of philosophy are nonsensical. And such was precisely the situation of the Greek physical philosophers as they are called. The contrast, much less the antagonism, between the human mind and the material world had never struck them, they were so much at home on the earth. The possibility of a conflict between the two was as unheard of as the possibility that the gods cannot be immortal *men* and still remain *gods*. Upon the development of this philosophical phase we cannot enter here. It must suffice to indicate the results reached by the time of Socrates. Two conclusions—a positive and a negative—had emerged. If substance—

the one and unchangeable—be at the back of *all* things, it cannot be simply *one*. The different phenomena wherein the world abounds could not be produced by any such agency. Therefore, there must be an infinite number of substances (atoms) identical in their constituent qualities which, in some way, happen to come together so as to frame the world revealed to us by our senses. In other words, the universe is ultimately, not *one*, but *many*. On the negative side a very curious inference had been drawn. It had been argued by one school that *our senses deceive us*, when they inform us that the universe is stable and unchanging. With equal force and show of evidence, it had been urged by other thinkers that *our senses deceive us*, when they lead us to believe that nothing but change is constantly taking place in the physical world. Atomism, or the reality of many *individual* things, was the positive result; a common conviction that the senses are deceptive, the negative. Both were conclusions precipitated from a philosophical inquiry into which neither the problems of mental equipment nor of moral aspiration had effectively entered.

(3) New difficulties thus growing out of old beliefs, and for this very reason apparently demanding a solution in antagonism with them, invariably tend to foster scepticism. This tendency was at flood-tide when Socrates lived. A fresh group of thinkers, called Sophists, had arisen who undertook to furnish the quick, yet puzzled Greek with some one surety amid his increasing doubts. Æschylus and Sophocles had traveled beyond the traditional conceptions of the gods; Parmenides and Heracleitus, while at odds on positive theory, were equally agreed that the senses are deceptive—and the senses were as-

sumed to furnish the solid material of knowledge. The Sophists seized upon these points and, for a moment, seemed likely to sway Greek thought. Their argument ran: In the religious sphere and in that of our knowledge of things there is no longer any certainty. Nevertheless, an easy way of deliverance lies open. There is no reason whatever why a man should question his own opinions. If "black" seem "white" to him, "white" let it be, despite all protests on the part of his neighbors. One man's opinion, if the senses do deceive, is quite as good as that of another. Individual bias is the sole and ultimate test, seeing that things are appearances and without fixed reality. Here the positive result of atomism coincides with the negative one of scepticism. The individual is the real, just as his opinion is the truth.

Any one can perceive that a doctrine of this kind—and its professors—would never have acquired influence but for some conspiring causes. And so it was with the Sophists. History became their ally. From a small, self-contained city-state, Athens had suddenly risen to be the first power in the Eastern world. Head of Greece in the momentous struggle with Persia, she had come by a great reward. Her sovereign people ceased to be citizens and became administrators of semi-imperial affairs. Consequently success in political life loomed larger than ever, its opportunities were so surpassingly extended. The Sophists acquired wealth, influence, and fame, in the first place, because they taught the Greek youth those arts of rhetorical display best fitted to move a popular assembly. The inevitable result was that "to expose fallacy or inconsistency was found to be both an easier process and a more appreciable

display of ingenuity, than the discovery and establishment of truth in such a way as to command assent." The old philosophy was eclipsed, like the old reverence, by the parade of a wisdom which, resting upon mere statement and backed only by skilled special pleading, recommended itself by its simplicity of attainment. And with these displays of sophistry Socrates was contemporary.

He thus appeared at a crisis in the history of the Greeks. Religion happened to be too materialized in its origins to include moral conceptions. Philosophy could furnish no explanation of the unity of the world. The subordination of the individual to the state had turned back the tide of Persian conquest, and each citizen, forgetful of the community, sought his share of the spoil.[1] In short, the *organism* of Greek society was beginning to break up; changes had long been in rapid process that could not but end in a new contrast. The individual citizen was tardily beginning to criticise the conditions of his citizenship, and so the perception that he was a man began to disturb him. Socrates is the interpreter of this new and quite unfamiliar sense of individuality. He is "the first of the Greeks who was not wholly Greek," because he is the earliest missionary who preached its own infinite value to the human soul. He emerged in the nick of time to find definite expression for a revolutionary perception that was vaguely formulating itself in the minds of his fellow-citizens. Like most prophets, he possessed a gospel, and for it met the martyr's death—wrought execution upon himself, because to have lived for his ideal furnished all the fulness that life could afford, to

[1] Cf. Thucydides, iii. 82.

forego it implied a death infinitely more terrible than physical dissolution. The man, his message, and his way of proclaiming it together constitute Socrates' significance, not only for his contemporaries, but also for universal history, in which he stands forth one of the most notable and pathetic figures.

The life-work of Socrates was to turn investigation from matter to man, to deflect interest from the foreign order of outer things to the inner realm of regnant personality. And to accomplish this successfully, he had to prove by his own career that the life is more than meat, the body than raiment. In an age of scepticism, he came incarnating a permanent belief in the ultimate reality of the human spirit, and justifying his ideal by showing in common life that richness of character is the only wealth worth winning. His biographer tells us: "He disciplined his mind and body by such a course of life that he who should adopt a similar one would, if no supernatural influence prevented, live in good spirits and uninterrupted health; nor would he ever be in want of the necessary expenses for it. So frugal was he, that I do not know whether any one could earn so little by the labor of his hands as not to procure sufficient to have satisfied Socrates." The enthusiasm and curiosity excited by his unique figure,[1] as well as the magnetic attraction he is known to have had, point to a striking difference between him and other contemporary teachers. In many respects he was not unlike the Sophists, and we are aware that some few classed him with them. He shared with them the independent spirit of free and fearless inquiry, though directing it to wholly diverse ends. After their fashion, he was accustomed to

[1] Cf. Plato's *Symposion*, 221b.

converse in market-place, gymnasia,[1] and at the social board, and to debate, not so much high and remote themes, as the familiar incidents of daily life. But being in his own estimation no more than a seeker after truth, he had no pupils; he simply talked with intimates, friends, and chance acquaintances. The constructive lessons of his discussions, the simplicity of his habits, and his consistent refusal to receive hire for his services, all went to prove that he was no Sophist, but a man eager to disclose a higher interpretation of life—one that could by no means be estimated in terms of gold and silver. For example, he enters into conversation with a typical Athenian coxcomb, by name Euthydemus. This youth "had collected many writings of the most celebrated poets and Sophists, and imagined that by this means he was outstripping his contemporaries in accomplishments." He is an excellent representative of the current sophistic tendencies. For he had "never learned anything of any person"—this was not possible if for each man, as the Sophists *taught* (in strange contradiction of their theory), his own opinions were final. Nevertheless, he is "willing to offer such advice as may occur to him without premeditation." A little intercourse with Socrates transforms him and, presently, he is forced to declare, "I no longer put confidence in the answers which I give; for all that I said before appears to me now to be quite different from what I then thought." Socrates employs the Sophists' own weapons to compass their defeat. Yet he does not rest satisfied with a barren victory in mere wordy warfare. This same Euthydemus constantly associates with him; and, as Xenophon tells us, "when Socrates saw that he was thus disposed, he no longer

[1] Cf. Plato's *Lysis*, 206e.

puzzled him with questions, but explained to him, in the simplest and clearest manner, what he thought that he ought to know, and what it would be best for him to study." Thus, there was a consistent method in what must have seemed to many of his fellow-citizens Socrates' peculiarities. He had a purpose, and to achieve this was his mission. He drew inspiration from a life-long desire to arrive at clear notions concerning self and the meaning of man's life. He possessed the most solemn conviction, the most serious belief, that such conclusions were both possible and imperatively necessary. His it was to have discerned the signs of the times. The indispensable need for a reformation of human knowledge regarding moral and religious questions pressed upon him in some sort as upon Jesus. Yet he labored under limitations. He accepted the self-opinionated individual of the Sophists—the social atom—but he could not stop here. His it was to arouse this personage to a perception of his obligations to other minds in thought, and to other persons in society. To this end, it was necessary to bring him to his senses so to speak, to convince him irresistibly that, at every turn, he leaned upon his fellow-men. By displaying the implications of the simplest judgments, and the most ordinary acts, Socrates proved that thought is an endowment of all men—that it is indigenous to human nature; he also indicated that the most commonplace deeds could not take place unless men were banded together in a social pact. So he brought about a reconstruction of knowledge alike in regard to thought and to virtue. A man must know the implications of living ere he can be virtuous. Or, as it is put in one of the most famous Socratic phrases, "an unexamined life is not worth living." Knowledge of self is the

cardinal condition of bettering life, of putting a man in a position to fulfil more efficiently his duties to the state and to himself as a rational being. One cannot guess at what he is most fitted to do, he must know; and to begin to know he must first arrive at a salutary conviction of his present ignorance. "For himself," as Xenophon says, "he would hold discourse from time to time, on what concerned mankind, considering . . . what was just, what unjust . . . what a state was, and what the character of a statesman; what was the nature of government over men, and the qualities of one skilled in governing them; and touching on other subjects, with which he thought that *those who were acquainted were men of worth and estimation*, but that *those who were ignorant of them might justly be deemed no better than slaves*." Man's knowledge of his own true nature alone insures that he will put it to its proper uses in life. For all life is moral life. It originates in the individual, yet it expands in him only in so far as he finds opportunity of associating himself with others. The deep-seated conviction that "virtue is knowledge" constitutes the kernel of the Socratic gospel.

The "Socratic gospel," be it remembered, not "the Gospel." For Socrates was hardly more emancipated than other Greeks from the limitations imposed by that city-state we have tried to picture. He displayed his own discernment, and so was a creator, but he did not create out of nothing. The end whereto he lived was clear to him; the means whereby he moved toward it he had of his people and age. Accordingly, while Greek civilization dated its perception of the moral value of the individual man from him, his estimate of this worth was restricted by the defi-

nite horizon of his own experience, by the fact that he passed his life in the medium of a highly specialized society ruled by an already existing ethical standard of its own. From the very restraints to which he found himself subject he derived his expansive force. Let us look at these disadvantages for a moment.

To begin with, a virtue that consists in knowledge is plainly the luxury of a few. It was formulated after consideration of the favored Greek citizen, and was minted specially for his use. Intellectualism is its vice. The uncultivated, the stupid, the immature, the preoccupied have no lot or part in it. Barbarians, women, children, and slaves cannot be virtuous from the nature of their situation. They do not enjoy the requisite opportunities. If they happen to be virtuous, it is in the midst of their ignorance, and so their very virtue comes to be a species of vice; their lives are morally worthless, because "unexamined." All that large class whose morality is conventional, or who so far act at haphazard, must be ticketed bad, whatever there excellencies. Calculation, proceeding from a rational view of circumstances, forms the seed-plot of virtue. All that lies without its limits can produce the good only by accident. Socrates, in short, made the immortal discovery that the value of human life, by reason of its very humanity, is the motive force of ethical action. He did not see that, on this basis, every man's life is equally valuable, for, being limited by Greek traditions, he still supposed that the stature of manhood which could rise to the moral level depended on conditions altogether independent of the individual. As his social materials were circumscribed, so his ideal of the possibilities of good living was cramped. He would not have been able to at-

tach any meaning to the declaration, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

And if he were thus restricted theoretically, he was not less bound practically. His whole career was of and for Athens. The knowledge which is virtue cannot outstrip the gifts of the gods to men. What they have bestowed must be thoroughly sifted and searched. Accordingly, the "good" culminates in right conduct as ruled by opportunity in social life. The city-state supplies the accordant conditions. The transformed character, the converted man, as the Christian terms him, could not then exist. Socrates was representative of all that to this hour remains typically valuable in Greek civilization. He was the artistic moralist, the teacher who perceived that an essential portion of moral greatness consists in putting out to usury the talents that man has. He makes no attempt to get away from life, like the Indian ascetic; nor, at the other pole, does he put forth any effort to renew life—to render it subservient to a fresh and infinitely higher purpose—like an apostle. He simply inculcates use of it in wisdom, in well weighed circumspection with regard to the circumstances amid which it is obviously placed. In this he is characteristically limited, and the practical restriction is typically Greek. The idea of sin had not then laid hold upon the conscience. Moral responsibility is not a man's obligation to his God—something infinite; but the duty of the Greek citizen, seeing that he is such, to do his best according as the laws and the interests of his community, which is finite, may determine. Morality thus centres in knowing what life is, and in accepting its conditions as material from which an excellent result may be wrought. Cul-

ture, moral culture, must be possible for every Greek, because the opportunities are there if he will but recognize them and learn how to employ them. The Socratic teaching, therefore, partakes in the nature of art, but of an art of life. Knowledge, the result of instruction, is indispensable, because it keeps men from ruining excellent material through preventable ignorance. It is this linking of moral capacity with opportunity that so puzzles the Christian. Nevertheless, the freedom of the individual to mould the formless mass of his own being—the Socratic master-thought—is that apart from which all morality whatsoever would be impossible. To enunciate this freedom was Socrates' mission; for it he died, and in dying gained immortality. For here "he being dead yet speaketh." Conscious morality in the ancient classical world begins with him, because he is the first to substitute the authority of the individual for that of the state. In his speech before his judges, he enunciated a new principle destined to affect the old world with increasing disquiet, to trouble it by calling up endless problems, and finally, to convict it of moral impotence. He originated a need that the resources of classical civilization could not meet. For the Christian alone can fully respond to the prophetic note struck in those words: "I then showed, not in word only, but in deed, that, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, I cared not a straw for death, and that my only fear was the fear of doing an unrighteous or unholy thing." So Socrates shifted the centre of the ancient order from external force and conformity to internal consistency and truth to self. But he conceived that to the Greek citizen alone was it given to compass this devotion to self. The great, the rich, and the noble are called; as for

the rest, they must be regarded as morally non-existent. Yet it was a master-stroke to have discovered that there were moral beings, that only men could be such, and that they could achieve advance in their ethical vocation only by co-operating with one another in society. Socrates thus adumbrated the doctrine, foreordained to go on ever afterwards increasing in sway—that virtue is the one thing in this world worth getting, because it stands marked off from all other goods in bearing its own reward with it; it is the one good, perfect in its self-centralization.

Yet Socrates was condemned to die the death. And why? He had sinned against his age in being greater than it, in being dissatisfied with its most characteristic achievements. No crime, or shadow of crime, could be recorded against him; nevertheless, he was thoroughly out of sympathy with the political conditions of his Athens. As Plato said, he was a gad-fly to the Athenians. For him Athens was the old imperfect state, not the City of God that he contemplated afar off in his moments of rarest aspiration. He plainly hinted that the good man, the type of citizen, could be produced neither by social position nor by popular election. So he opposed partisans of oligarchy and democracy alike. Only he who knows the art of ruling is fit to decree just judgment. Not all citizens are naturally capable of discharging executive functions, as the democratic party thought; neither does this capacity accompany certain outward advantages, such as family and wealth, as the oligarchs presumed. So all united in clamoring for his death. As often happens, those who stoned the prophet were really erecting an everlasting monument to him. In spiritual life, a thing "cannot be quickened except it die." And, as John Stuart Mill

says, "Socrates was put to death, but the Socratic philosophy rose like the sun in the heavens, and spread its illumination over the whole intellectual firmament." He had made a contribution to man's religious, moral, and social progress that never can be lost. Once and for ever he had shown that the moral universe is of man's spirit all compact. So he protested against a rule of life drawn at haphazard from this or that set of opinions; he urged the duty of rising to clear consciousness of one's own aptitudes; above all, he claimed for the individual a right to employ them in his own service as well as in that of the state. Thus he broke down the old Greek artistic idea.[1] Life is not a limited material out of which as good a statue as possible is to be chiselled. Life, being unique in every man, the possible results are of infinite variety,—no plan can be imposed upon it for its perfecting. Each separate soul in the Greek world must needs be treated on its own merits; and the highest illustration of this principal Socrates set forth in his own daily walk and conversation. He discovered himself, and in the light of this revelation set about arranging his relations to his fellow-men. So he liberated a principle entirely foreign to, and destructive of, the conventional presuppositions of the traditional Hellenic moralists, or rather politicians. Hence his peculiarly personal contribution. More of a saint than a thinker, he lived his own solution of his own problem, walking darkly amid the shades wherewith the crystallized civilization of his day surrounded him. More of a prophet than a philosopher, he perceived that the end was not yet, he knew that it

[1] Cf. Aristotle's *Ethics*, iii. 14 (1119 a 11); Plato's *Republic*, iii. 401.

was not his to utter the whole burden of his message. He comprehended "the absolute necessity for a further illumination," and even ventured "in express words to prophesy the future advent of some heaven-sent guide." Yet he knew not the things whereof he spoke. The divine purpose in creation had to labor yet awhile in sore travail of the human spirit ere the deliverer could come. So he "died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and confessed" that he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. He desired a "better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called" his God; for he hath prepared for him a city. Thus Socrates takes his place among the indispensable heralds of the Gospel, and we are his heirs. He was a chief among that mighty company who, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." So his career was not lost, but passed as an integral element into that corporate immortality wherein all the martyrs, saints, and prophets of human aspiration are most truly partakers.

CHAPTER III

GREEK SELF-CRITICISM

> "None of them was left alone to live as he chose; but passing their time in the city . . . their avocations ordered with a view to the public good, they regarded themselves as belonging, not to themselves, but to their country."

To preserve the subtle aroma of Greek civilization no common means sufficed. Where religious, civic, and artistic life commingled so finely, the ordinary methods of abstract thinking could not but result in a more or less distorted and inadequate reproduction. As usually happens, the moment gave birth to the man. Plato was philosopher, poet, and citizen in a single personality; and by his rich imagination, no less than by his rare insight and manifold civic associations, he so reacted upon Hellenic culture as to embody its distinctive traits in a final transcript, enhancing the while its most essential principles. Detail for its own sake disappeared in his atmospheric halo, the entire impression remained so heightened as to be unmistakable and completely expressive. Unsystematized his thinking may be, effective in offering a consistent result it undoubtedly is and always must remain. With Aristotle, on the other hand, analysis crept in, and, in a "plain historical way," the elements incident to the Greek universe unfolded themselves with that clearness invariably more or less incident to the review *seriatim*. In the Platonic writings the Greek man revealed himself, show-

ing forth the subtle influences that lost their intellectual separateness and found their full realization in his culture; in the Aristotelian books the Greek thinker reported all this life had to tell of man, of society, of the physical world. The two are thus complementary, and yet both are philosophers. They execute their work under conditions that do not differ entirely.

His lines having been cast in a sceptical age, and his destined function being the foundation of moral philosophy, Socrates cannot be summed up in a single phrase. An evasive twofold movement marked his thought. He was a Sophist in so far as he consciously tried to turn attention from the dogmas of the older physicists to the important issues centering more immediately in human life. With him man claims imperatively the importance once thrust upon nature; and like other moralists, he finds the best exemplification of his contention, not in a vague, abstract humanity, but in the fulness of individual character. In this he apparently approaches the conclusion of the great Sophist, Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things; of what is that it is; of what is not that it is not." Yet, for the most part, he escapes the dangers of individualism. For although primarily a moralist, he is never content with the citizen in isolation—a contradiction, not merely in terms, but also in fact. Here his large sympathy, a main element in the secret of his power, comes to the rescue and preserves the balance. A moralist, Socrates is, although to some extent unconsciously, an Athenian also. Man achieves no vocation as a measure unless there be objects of measurement. In other words, although each may have a life to live, if not a soul to save, Socrates knew that a human career bears certain limitations with it

which, indeed, constitute the very possibility of its success. No Greek of the classical period laid such firm hold upon the truth of the importance of individual worth; many Greeks knew the correlative truth of social opportunity as fully; and two reviewed it with far more persuasive effect. So, for the generations who came immediately after Socrates' death, the semi-scepticism, semi-individualism of his teaching sink into the background, while his shadowy conception of a socialized reason pushes its way to the front, receiving apotheosis from Plato, explanation from Aristotle. Or, to express the development with special reference to our present inquiry, attention reverts, for a time, from evolution of the sense of individuality to the accomplished facts of social organization. But although the past seems thus to be reinstated for a moment at the expense of the pregnant movements of the present, there are compensations and to spare. The Greek ideal had been actually realized, in so far as any ideal ever can be; it remained to body it forth clearly and in completeness by means of philosophical thought, as all operative ideals come to be preserved sooner or later for the benefit of posterity. Plato and Aristotle sounded the heights and depths of Hellenic civilization as a whole; from the same mouths proceeded at once justification and judgment.

When we speak of Socrates, we ever hold the man, the distinctive personality, in the mind's eye. When Plato and Aristotle are mentioned, the author or thinker is the uppermost idea; the man tends to recede and to be cast into shadow by the writings. Interest centres in what Socrates did, in what Plato and Aristotle wrote, thought, systematized. The popular instinct shows a true intuition in enforcing this contrast.

For Socrates fills his place on the world's great stage in virtue of his life and practical teaching; his chief pupils by their reasoned representation of this same life. Hence their vastly deeper significance as Greeks, his incomparably more fascinating interest as a human being. Plato and Aristotle found conscious expression for ideals that had long been moulding the conduct of men who were unconscious of their inner import. Thousands upon thousands of Greeks, dead and gone, had spent themselves for the "Justice" of the *Republic*, or had fashioned their behavior as if in full view of the "Magnanimous Man" limned in the *Ethics*. Warriors and statesmen, sailors and artists, laborers, women and little children, had poured their all—their life—into the seething society of the city-state. Although they knew not what they did, their united sacrifice had blossomed into the unparalleled achievements of sculptors, dramatists, rulers, orators, and historians, who were more conscious of the hidden springs of unity only because their sacrifice happened to be fraught with larger opportunities, and their highest selfhood was wrought out in a career that depended with fuller completeness on the whole body politic. But they too, like their nameless and forgotten brethren, knew disappointment, defeat, and death. All that they had hoped for did not come to pass, yet their balked aspiration, just in so far as it was balked, transmitted itself to posterity, there to be transformed from the prophecy of aspiration into the fulfilment of fact, or to act as the seed-plot of a still more momentous future. Ignorance, suffering, failure met justification, consecration, and success in the mighty age of Pericles. Then for a brief space the cruelly mutilated dreams of a race came to their kingdom in

a world that now seems to us to partake in this very dream-nature. Or, once more, at a later day, the Greek went forth to civilize the Roman Empire, sure of success in the riches of his inheritance. What were these mystic, eager ambitions? What justification can be read out of their results? Above all, how preserve their consequences fresh; how stay the hand of time's decay from their magnificent accomplishment? Plato and Aristotle came to answer these questions. The former, affection bathing his fine spirit, caught the very life of his country and kept it alive for our instruction, enabling us to see, even in these last days, that in its very being its complete justification lay enshrined. The latter, prompted partly by curiosity and partly by the rapid change of circumstances, displayed its permanent lesson, looking rather to this and that aspect of its varied manifestation than to the entire life itself. Plato incarnated the stages of the Hellenic story over again, and gathered up its timeless teaching in one great book. Aristotle, keeping his eye on an object more than on a pulsating organism, drew the numerous inferences it suggested, now in this aspect, now in that, and explained the laws that it seemed to illustrate. In short, all the strength and all the weakness of Hellenic culture were brought to clear consciousness by the united efforts of the two masters; and in their works the assembled characteristics remain for the instruction and warning of humanity.

In its two permanently significant thinkers the Hellenic spirit gathers itself together, so to speak, and applies its assembled resources to the fundamental problems of the nature of the universe and of man's being. Socrates' suggestion, that "an unexamined life is not worth

living," reappears broadened and deepened. For the life of society, critically scrutinized from every side, has been substituted for the necessarily restricted interests of the single personality; the individual must needs display himself in the light shed by the community. Plato tries to fathom the connection between the thing and the thinker; to show how the various elements in experience—thought, sensation, passion, and the like—interact; to set forth man's necessarily moral nature as it stands revealed in his indispensable relation to the political organization. Speaking generally, he fails, or rather does not attempt, to separate these inquiries, mainly because the organic idea of the state had laid strong and, in a way, vivifying hold upon him. The *Republic*, his chief constructive work, is a treatise on everything—a metaphysic, psychology, sociology, a philosophy of religion, of education, of art. This, indeed, accounts at once for its undying interest and for its sometimes disappointing limitations. Aristotle, on the contrary, separated all these quests, systematized some, invented a precise scientific language for their due discussion, sought to discover and apply principles in each restricted sphere. Yet he and his master alike embody the complete awakening of the Greek spirit—first aroused in Socrates—from its long satisfaction with half-truths. The fact that there are two worlds—a mental and a material, an ideal and a physical, one of reason and one of passion, a moral and a political—is now fully perceived, and the magnitude of the resultant problems permits of no easy or offhand solution. Thus, so far as concerns our present task, the service of Plato and Aristotle was to state fully, and with unmistakable decision, the deepest question that humanity is con-

tinually called upon to face from age to age; they realized the tremendous antagonisms whereof thought and action are equally so prolific. There *are* two worlds. Are they utterly foreign to each other? Or can we by searching find out God—that principle of unity which, manifested similarly in both, proves their ultimate and unalterable harmony?

The limitations here imposed upon us plainly rule out anything in the nature of a competent review of extended systems devoted to topics so high and intricate. It must be sufficient for us to suppress processes and to rest content with concentrating attention upon results. Two leading consequences ought to be kept conspicuously in sight. Both masters tend to fall into what is termed abstractness—that is to say, their effort to view life and the universe as a whole, whether from the ethical or the metaphysical standpoint, stops short of completeness. With them, as always, searching does not find out God, because, for Plato, the social unity tends to swamp the individual's distinctive characteristics; for Aristotle, an intellectual life, that seems to sit loosely to the world of reality, constitutes the highest idea. In a word, antagonisms are found to be suppressed rather than overcome, and so righteousness never flows down the streets like a river, nor is God very near to each one of us. In the very explanation of differences seeds of new problems lie hidden, destined to burst forth at no distant date. Paradoxically, Greek self-criticism ends in a reconstruction which is at once permanently instructive and fundamentally imperfect, simply because the criticism happened to be Greek and Greek only. For our present purpose, it must suffice to consider these two contrasted sides.

Regarded in its organic relation to the Preparation for Christianity, the interest of Hellenic civilization, whether within Greece itself or in the wider areas of the Macedonian and Roman Empires, naturally converges upon the gradual awakening of a sense of the value of human personality and its implications. The story of this growth dates from Socrates, as we have seen. Immediately after his death, what are known as the Minor Socratic Schools appeared, and set forth an account of life which dealt specifically with man the individual. According to the Cyrenaics, a man is to live for pleasure; according to the Megarians, for intellectual attainment; according to the Cynics, for liberty from social conventions. But, as has also been shown, the events of Greek national history forced the social problem upon Plato and Aristotle and led them to dismiss the individual for a little, or at least to minimize his importance, except in relation to the society of which he was a member. While, then, these thinkers may be said to call a halt in the onward course of development, for this very reason they contrive to convey lasting lessons—first, because they sum up the total contribution of Hellenic genius; second, because they adopt a standpoint supposed to be peculiarly modern. Recognition of the law that a human being is his brother's keeper, with its attendant gospel of "ethical culture," is conceived by many to-day to be a main discovery of the nineteenth century spirit. Accordingly, we find that Plato and Aristotle often speak in strangely familiar tones. In some respects, their outlook happens to be not unlike our own. At the same time, they afford us the sole opportunity of estimating at once the strength and the weaknesses of the social idea as it was then conceived—char-

acteristics which, in their defects at all events, profoundly influenced the ancient world in its slow awakening to consciousness of those necessities which Christianity alone could supply.

The constructive vigor, like the perennial attractiveness and importance of Plato and Aristotle, flows from their attempt to present the unity of the material world and the solidarity of Greek manhood. Their effort was to arrive at principles capable of explaining the differences and antagonisms whereof nature and society are so prolific. In other words, they are permanently significant because they first rise to the true philosophical standpoint, the standpoint which, alike in the sciences, in sociology, and in speculative thinking proper, marks the best modern thought. The lasting value and import of such an outlook upon the deeper things of life lies in its distinctively constructive character. And although, as was natural, Plato and Aristotle abound in criticism, especially of their predecessors, in what follows we must suppress this aspect of their thought so as to concentrate upon the permanent rather than the transitory.

The mission of a great thinker usually proves to be twofold. He sums up the essential elements incident to the past and the present of the civilization he represents; and from the fresh height thus attained he issues direction for the future. His aim commonly is to conserve what he deems best, and, with this in remembrance, to point out what ought to be eliminated if certain attendant abuses are to be mitigated or wholly removed. Plato and Aristotle perform these offices perfectly for their own day and generation. With the one, a profound sense of the necessity for social reconstruction predominates; with the other, a perception of the need for es-

caping unfavorable contemporary conditions begins to reveal itself. The construction of a new state wherein all the imperfections incident to the Athenian democracy would be removed, wherein the vicious extremes developed by the Greek citizen would be suppressed, forms the central point of interest. Complete provision is to be made for the education of man—and education is a political matter, it implies contact with others—so that he may be skilled to discern what is of civic importance, or be schooled to rise superior to the rashness, grossness, or vain display which, as experience had shown, entrap the ill-trained. Formally, this view possesses the greatest merit. But its success depends upon the kind of society which bestows the education, and upon the kind of aim contemplated. Of a truth, man is not a worthy specimen of humanity till he has been so educated as to be fit to fill a place in the social organism—till, thanks to his training, he has attained a clear ideal to which his life may be worthily consecrated. When the picture is filled in, we find that the state is to be served by the practice of four cardinal virtues—Temperance, Courage, Wisdom, and Justice—and by a carefully cultivated perception of the reasons why they are indispensable. Society reposes upon Justice, but not in our sense of this term. Justice turns out to be a principle rather than a virtue. It pervades the body politic when every citizen finds himself occupying the position for which his capacity fits him, and without complaint remains constant in the sphere whereto he has thus been relegated.

Further, the state is to be the sole judge both of this capacity and of the situation it necessarily entails. The dangers which threatened the very existence of the Greek *politeia*—the heedlessness

of the people, their attention to the rhetoric of mere incompetent charlatans, their readiness to receive and to give unworthy flattery—had come to be sufficiently obvious to the reflective. And it was Plato's intense desire to save the state first, because only through its preservation could the regeneration of the individual be accomplished. In his view, the citizen possessed a single right—that of filling the position for which nature had fitted him; and the state, for its own continued existence, must so arrange that every one should occupy his own predestined niche. The one lives and moves and has his being in the many. Plato recognizes, once for all, that society is an organized system, and he sees too that, like all systems, it must be viewed in the light of the specific ends which it subserves. His strength depends upon this perception; his weakness lies in the limitations he deemed it requisite to impose. The kind of state constitutes his ideal; with Aristotle, on the other hand, the kind of life to be attained by the best forms the be-all and end-all of moral theory. Both agree that, by thinking, God—the harmonious unity of life and things—can be discovered. The one turns his thought upon an ideal community wherein philosophers will be kings; the other upon an ideal career of contemplation which the temper of civilization as a whole will render possible. For this reason both are at once final and yet representative of a transition. They are final in that their abstract thinking is constantly dominated by practical purposes and, in part, their interpretation of the practical cannot be improved upon. The social character of their speculation and its outcome on the formal side must always remain guides for mankind. Even Christianity has come to express its moral teaching in the forms em-

ployed by them. Upon this social characteristic we have already insisted; its formal perfection may now engage our attention for a little.

"Every form of virtue arises from the effort of the individual to satisfy himself with some good conceived as true or permanent, and it is only as common to himself with a society that the individual can so conceive of a good." The lasting influence of the Platonic and Aristotelian teaching is to be sought in its ceaseless inculcation of this fact. As Aristotle put it, "Virtue is a power of working beneficently." Every human being possesses such a power, not for himself alone, but rather in and for the society to which he belongs. The social medium affords him the opportunities requisite to his development of himself. Regarded thus, the lessons conveyed by the great Greeks are eternal. Virtue cannot be conceived of, much less practically realized, under any other conditions. The kind of society involved, like the nature of the moral end sought, may be imperfect. The fact that morality is other-regarding as well as self-regarding, that it is impossible except in and through a society, must ever remain a fundamental truth. It is the lasting achievement of the Athenian thinkers to have been the first to comprehend that a well-ordered community is both the beginning and the end of ethical progress. Without it moral situations cannot come into being, and, in its fundamental evolution, it is itself an ever progressing revelation of this very morality. Thus, so far as formal statement goes, even we Christians cannot travel beyond Aristotle's deliverance:—"The single virtue of practical wisdom implies the presence of all the moral virtues;" nor beyond Plato's, less specific though it be:—"And in truth, said I, I think, looking as it were from

a watch-tower, since we have reached this point in our story, that there is one form of virtue and endless kinds of vice." Plato's teaching stands good for all time, because he recognized the originating source of virtue—interest in a socialized good. Aristotle, too, is enrolled among the permanent benefactors of man, because he saw the real end for which all morality makes—interest in the good for its own sake. Undeveloped the social conception was, imperfect the idea of the moral goal, but the *shape* taken by the common teaching is that within which all moral insight must ever fall. The bettering of life through the intercourse between men, who seek good for its own sake, implies at once individuals and communities—that is, takes up into itself all the resources at command. For the life that is thus enriched is not merely yours, mine, but also that of the neighbors among whom we move. Plato and Aristotle must be counted among the immortal guides of humanity, because they inculcate pursuit of good for the sake of good, and because they know that such pursuit is impossible without social conditions, without a stimulating sense of debt to the society that affords the opportunities for well-doing. Their "thought is in a sense ever young," for they tell us that "the moral is the criterion of the supernatural." Only as God reveals Himself in many ways do we find the fit occasions to reveal ourselves in the one manner sufficient for us—devotion to duty and goodness according to our appointed circumstances.

Yet while the form of the Greek teaching was final, its matter was but temporary. As is always the case, the society whence Plato and Aristotle drew their materials was marked by the defects of its excellencies. These are of the last impor-

tance for our present inquiry, because gradual realization of them by the men of the ancient world produced that feeling of helplessness which so powerfully assisted to spread Christianity and to deepen conviction of its fundamental truth. They may be very briefly summarized as follows:—

(1) In the first place, the Greek conscience was characterized by an elasticity that seems strangely in contradiction with the formal perfection attained by the typical thinkers. This was largely traceable to the influence exerted by the analogy from art, already adverted to, and by the presence of a slave class. Sane use of life, especially in avoidance of all disturbing extremes, was a noticeable feature of Hellenic genius. The materials supplied by human nature and by society were regarded as so much "stuff," to be moulded into a harmonious whole by the moral artist. Naturally, then, many things were permitted which we should eschew, or deem inappropriate, such, for example, as regulated indulgence in what Christians would term sensual pleasures. This was inevitable in a social state where women were supposed to be without rights, to stand on much the same level as children or slaves or animals. As naturally, too, some enthusiasms, from which much that is good in Christian civilization flows, either were tabooed or had not yet gained recognition. Much that we associate with the nature of religion, for instance, either did not exist or seemed to imply excesses inconsistent with the happy medium of moral excellence. The "well-considered practice of the good," simply on account of this "consideration," circumscribed the sphere supposed to be coextensive with the possibilities of goodness.

(2) As a consequence of this, the Greek moral universe was distinctly straitened. Such virtues as temperance and self-denial which, with the truly upright modern man, overflow all life, were viewed as specially germane only to desires connected with satisfaction of bodily appetites and as dependent on circumstances. Typical of this is the Socratic idea that fornication is better than adultery, because likely to be less disturbing in its results. The Greek simply feared inartistic excess if certain appetites—say hunger, thirst, and sex—were too freely gratified, where we abhor the very suggestion of any license. Where the Christian regards indulgence as bad in itself, the Greek viewed it as unfitting a citizen for the performance of certain offices. If intemperance break in upon the rights of others, it ought to be checked; but where, as in the case of women and slaves, others possess no rights, the sphere in which a certain artistic freedom might be allowed inevitably came to be somewhat elastic. Indulgence is not evil in itself, but rather as it militates specifically against the preservation of that measure or balance on which the well-regulated life depends. Otherwise, it may very possibly be harmless, and, therefore, quite permissible.

(3) A third defect of the Platonic and Aristotelian view was its tendency to intellectualism. Virtue reposes so much upon knowledge that it always remains a good open to the few only. A man must *know* how moral attainment is conditioned by sensual and social restrictions and by the material circumstances peculiar to the constitution of the universe. A certain contemplation, implying a certain trained capacity for reflection, is requisite for a man's moralization. Accordingly, virtue turns out to be aristocratic, but few can enjoy it in fulness. In these circumstances,

the intellectual perception on which morality reposes may bring with it the conviction that, after all, so few can be good that goodness may not greatly flourish here below. Aristotle's ideal man remains an ideal; the pattern of Plato's ideal state is laid up in the heavens. So a species of hopelessness, which was to reappear later with such momentous consequences, may be traced even in Plato, the most idealistic of Greek thinkers. "Evils, Theodorus, can never perish; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. Of necessity they hover round this mortal sphere and the earthly nature, having no place among the gods in heaven. Wherefore, also, we ought to fly away thither, and to fly away thither is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy and just and wise." This sense of hopelessness gradually emerged from a system that treated the great mass of the people as incapable of moral culture, and consequently tended to teach those who could attain it to deem ideals difficult of attainment amid abounding defects. Ethical culture that depends upon intellect cannot but be confined to a privileged caste; and, if morality be social, this caste, being but a drop in the bucket, is apt to find effort after excellence too high for it, or productive of little practical effect in the entire life wherein perforce it shares.

(4) Again, the Greek theory is for the most part socialistic. It leaves little room for individual initiative. The moral consequences of this are obvious. If, in the state, every man is to be legislatively relegated to his place, some of his possibilities are sure to be neglected. A mutilated man can be the only result of a society in which property is abolished; in which the sweet

relations of the family are eliminated; in which no field is left open wherein one may execute judgment as to his capacity for serving others along with himself. Plato committed himself to an unselfishness that was of no avail, because its sphere of action had been blotted out. He fell into the very old, and still somewhat common, fallacy of seeking to create the spiritual out of the unspiritual. In order to induce men to live the best life, he completely deprived them of the very reasons why they should seek to continue to live at all. In fact, the socialistic element in the Greek ethical scheme so operated as to lead to a paradoxical conclusion. Morality was to be the consequence of an organized system of immorality. The plan of forcing men to rise superior to personal interests by depriving them of all interests whatsoever—a mark of every socialistic arrangement—is absurd, mainly because, thus limited, man falls below the level of individuality,—the conditions out of which moral life can grow are improved out of existence.

(5) Finally, there is an aspect of it in which Greek morality centres in the principle of self-love. For this the identification of the ethical with the æsthetic standpoint must be held responsible. "Virtue," Plato teaches, "will be a kind of health and beauty and good habit of the soul; and vice will be a disease and deformity and sickness of it." Even more explicitly Aristotle reasons from the artistic analogy. A good man "will be eager in a moderate and right spirit for all such things as are pleasant and at the same time conducive to health or to a sound bodily condition, and for all other pleasures, so long as they are not prejudicial to these, or inconsistent with noble conduct, or extravagant beyond his means. For unless a person limits him-

self in this way, he affects such pleasures more than is right, whereas the temperate man follows the guidance of right reason." Or, as Plato puts it, revealing the inner principle, "The virtue of each thing, whether body or soul, instrument or creature, when given to them in the best way, comes to them not by chance, but as the result of the order and truth and art which are imparted to them." The self constitutes the central interest; it is filled with material out of which a good statue may be chiselled ethically; to know how to do this is the starting-point of all moral advance. The self that continues ignorant in this matter cannot be regarded as morally estimable; it may be disregarded. Here we have an instance of the error which Philo noted so exactly under the influence of the different temper of the first Christian century. "Man," he says, "should not regard the world as an appendage to himself, but himself as an appendage to the world." This self, which treats the world as its property, is the power that separates between God and mankind, between man and man. And implicitly it played a great part in Greek teaching, more especially as it was embodied in the moral precepts of Aristotle.

To sum up. The very strength of Hellenic culture was the prime source of its defects. Civilization as a whole is so complex that one finds it hard either to analyze it into its elements or to describe it. Its significance lies, not so much here or there, but rather in the definite judgment that at such and such periods it tends to an obvious goal. Regarded thus, the culture of Greece is, if not the most significant phase in the evolution of civilization, at all events one of the most significant. This constitutes its permanent strength. For what we have to weigh is,

not the advance of humanity as a whole, but the point reached by it in a given community. The perfection of Greek society, then, lay in the circumstance that it realized a state of civilization such as had never been reached before. As a progressive stage in the development of mankind it was characterized by affinity for the ideal and good, rather than by attraction for the bad and backsliding. This attribute revealed itself in the freeborn citizen principally. Culture for one class in the state, from its very partiality, attained an unprecedented measure of excellence. Still, it was for the few only. The organism starved while the member waxed. Then the inevitable reaction set in, and all were involved in a common sickness. The citizens, strong at first and devoted to the realization of their ideals, in the end became affected by effeminacy, by lightheadedness, by immorality, all of them incident to excessive culture and to contempt for toil. Finally, they were enslaved by a foreign power, and even that which they had was taken from them. But their travail had not been in vain. For their social traditions remained enshrined in lofty writings which embodied the type of higher manhood that it had been the mission of their community to develop. The fall of the Hellenic state was due to its inherent weakness; but this very weakness was incidental to its excellence. The achievement of Greek civilization was splendid, because it was for the few. It was the work of the slave that furnished the citizens with their unparalleled opportunities for self-improvement. They so far actualized their ideal of life; but this stood for their elevation or enjoyment, not for that of all men. They thus attained a level which, in its way, is without equal; but the

way is not entirely good, and so the institutions born of it had to give place to others.

Yet in one aspect of it the Greek conception of the good is final. Early society always associated the good and the good life with the acquisition of worldly rewards. Not till the time of Plato and Aristotle did a higher conception become prevalent. They tell us that the good life is not that in which virtue is reduced to the level of a means to personal ease, but is rather that process of development of character in which the virtues are considered ends in themselves. "Once for all they conceived and expressed the conception of a free or pure morality as resting on what we may venture to call a disinterested interest in the good." Or, to put it otherwise, the moral theory of Plato and Aristotle is final, in that the moral life was to them, not a career of pleasure, of search for external things, but, on the contrary, one in which the exercise of the virtues themselves is the true aim. But while their conception of the moral life is thus perfect, their notion of the good man is not. They failed to fill out the ideal they had created. They finished the work given them to do when they created the ideal—the life of morality for the sake of morality. But the morality itself that they had in mind was relative to the time in which they lived. Their good man, naturally, was Greek through and through. With him self-sacrifice is fortitude. To die for a barbarian or a slave would, in his eyes, have been a contravention of propriety. To die for his state was, with the Spartan, his chiefest glory. Thus the Greek conception of the highest life may be said to have fallen short, practically, of its theoretical perfection. Society was an organism existing for the benefit of Greek citizens; all others were ex-

cluded from its privileges, or enjoyed them in but small part. And so the civilization passed away, because the universal idea which it contained inevitably ruptured the form into which it was introduced. It needed a cosmopolitan spirit, not a national one, and a religious fervor, not an intellectual curiosity, ere mankind could, as matter of fact, come into line with the eternal conception promulgated by the Athenian sages.

CHAPTER IV

SALVATION BY WISDOM

"Greeks seek after wisdom."—I COR. i. 22.

On a survey of their history as a whole, it becomes evident that, under Providence, the Greeks fulfilled a twofold office in the Preparation for Christianity. In the period of their prime they built up a unique organization, so limited in size and yet so highly specialized that the object-lesson it affords of the influence wrought by all-pervading purposes still remains, not merely the most startling on record, but also the most easily read. There is nothing in all history so absolutely unmistakable. But this glorious age was doomed to pass away, and with its disappearance one office of the Greeks became matter of tradition. The vocation of citizenship describes this period appropriately. Two writers, one intimate with the actual circumstances, the other viewing them from a distance, have summed it up. The latter, Plutarch, tells us in his *Life of Theseus*, "Now after the death of his father Ægeus, forming in his mind a great and wonderful design, Theseus gathered together all the inhabitants of Attica into one town, and made them one people of one city, whereas before they lived dispersed, and were not easy to assemble upon any affair for the common interest. . . . He dissolved all the distinct state-houses, council-halls, and magistracies, and built one common state-house and council-hall on the site of the

present upper town, and gave the name of Athens to the whole state, ordaining a common feast and sacrifice which he called Panathanæa, or the sacrifice of all the united Athenians." Plato, on the other hand, brings out the principle of unity that formed the central life of this association. "What at the commencement we laid down as a universal rule of action when we were founding our state, this, if I mistake not, or some modification of it, is justice. I think we affirmed, if you recollect, and frequently repeated, that *every individual ought to have some one occupation in the state, which should be that to which his natural capacity was best adapted*. . . . That fourth *principle in every child and woman, in every slave, freeman, and artisan, in the ruler, and in the subject, requiring each to do his own work, and not meddle with many things*." In an organized society of the kind here sketched each citizen paid dearly for his privileges according to modern judgment. As a man he counted for little; his glory, like his opportunity, lay in his membership of the state, and in return for this he unconsciously gave his whole career. Unconsciously be it said, because the Greek was unaware how he spent himself for his city; it sufficed him, and no sense of loss pressed upon his soul till the unique circumstances that provided him with all things began to crumble away.

This degeneration was due partly to internal, partly to external, causes. Athens' sudden rise to power after she had stemmed the awful tide of Persian invasion intoxicated her people. Strangers abounded within her gates, and her old virtue failed to inoculate the new stock. The conqueror of Xerxes had been succeeded by "a loafer in the market-place and on the hill of Assembly, averse equally to personal service and to

direct taxation for the weal of his city, who was little better than an out-pauper with his constant cry, *panem et circenses*, having replaced the unreasoned belief of his forefathers that the individual exists for the state, by a reasoned conviction that the state exists to support and amuse the individual. That his city should have a circle of tributary dependencies whose contributions should pay for mercenaries to fight and row in his stead, for ships to secure his corn-supply, and for free shows in his theatre and his stadium, was a consummation which he contented himself with desiring devoutly. He would neither fight nor pay for its accomplishment, and with his idle criticism, his spoiled temper, his love of litigation, and his ceaseless talk, he so hampered his own executive that it could carry out no imperial policy, and the few men of action left in the city hastened to reside beyond his reach." Pride—a major vice with the Greek moralists—laid hold upon Athens, frivolity and lack of restraint accompanied it, and resentment was thus rapidly fomented among allied and rival states. Internal jealousies between the various cities, always smouldering, now became obtrusive, and internecine strife burst forth. Finally, exhausted, impoverished, and degenerate Hellas fell an easy prey to foreign conquest. By Aristotle's time, Philip and Alexander had accomplished their work, free Greece had been swallowed up by the Macedonian empire.

Shorn of their old self-government, the free cities dwindled precisely where dwindling is most disastrous—they failed to furnish any longer those sufficing opportunities for exercise of civic vocation which had rendered generations of Greeks content with a circumscribed life, simply because its limitations never struck them. But

roused now to clear consciousness by a long series of crushing blows, stripped of nigh all that had rendered life precious and honorable, they entered upon a new career, one altogether diverse from the first, one immeasurably less picturesque and striking, though destined for a period to exercise widespread influence. Deprived of his city, the Greek went forth to hellenize the known universe and, partly unconscious of this task, to discover a new mission for himself. With traditional opportunities swept away or sadly attenuated, the question came to be, What is the use of life? Moreover, this fresh problem was not of social interest; each individual apart must needs solve it for himself. Thus the second main office of the Greeks was to develop the perception of personality, and to compass, with such aid as human reason afforded, a scheme for the worthiest conduct of life. In this search, and as if by the way, he gave laws to his conquerors. The tale of this period is the narrative of an attempt at salvation by wisdom. And as the plan was foredoomed to failure, the story is also one of a gradual exhaustion of the sources whence man could, by his own faculty, extract self-satisfaction, or acquire insight into the ultimate import of life and the universe.

Disinherited, and thrown into the seething maelstrom of a mighty empire, man, not now as a Greek citizen, but as a human being, found himself face to face with the perennial problems surrounding the meaning of this mysterious world. Without the supports afforded by a career clearly mapped out in a well-defined social medium, these questions became, not merely more pressing, but of immediate moment to every reflective person. The overwhelming difficulty connected itself with the ordering of the soul—it no longer stood

related to the constitution of the city. Citizenship in the old sense, implying that every freeman was a judge in matters of high policy, had degenerated into provincial municipalism; the counting of bricks, the weighing of mortar, the provision of sites for self-advertising monuments had displaced momentous constitutional issues and far-reaching decisions on foreign policy. In these circumstances, it was a clamant question, How is a man to live so as to safeguard his own well-being? How can he most profitably husband and employ his own resources, seeing that all others are gone? The post-Aristotelian Schools, as they are usually termed, arose to make reply.

The urgency of the new need is enforced and illustrated by the wonderful unanimity that marked these schools, despite the extraordinary fierceness that sometimes accompanied their mutual polemics. Whether the competing philosophical sects were aware of it or not, they proved themselves subservient to a common aim. Be they Epicureans or Stoics or Sceptics, all are intensely—sometimes pathetically—desirous of formulating a scheme of life, of providing the individual man with such a sketch plan of conduct that, by due observance of its provisions, he may make the best, not now of citizenship, but of himself. All evince profound anxiety to place the most worthy career within reach of everybody. Widely as they may differ in respect of the means to be employed, the end sought was invariably identical. Furthermore, as time passed and evils became still rifer, one can trace a distinct tendency towards minimizing differences, and towards concentrating available suggestions upon the desired result. The truth that, above all things, men must be armed to free

themselves from the wearinesses that flesh entails, gradually outweighs assorted fictions concerning the method whereby this consummation is to be gained. As men realize that they are less and less citizens, they come to know that they are more and more human beings. And for each soul the question of last importance is, How am I to live, how prepare to die? Accordingly, "Individualism in ethics, subordination of all science to an ethical end, and materialistic realism are common" equally to Epicurean and Stoic. The Sceptics, too, no matter how they may criticise and deride the positive teaching of the rest, are at one with them in their individualism. The fact of personal consciousness, of personal existence, of individuality, is the one prominent feature that even the most consistent doubter cannot explain away. Finally, and in further proof of substantial unanimity, the watchwords of all the philosophical sects possess permanent value, not so much because they happen to be partly true, but rather because they bear practically the same relation to the life of the time. All are striving to set up landmarks and to furnish direction suitable to a condition of affairs for which, as was inevitable, the great systematic thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, had apparently furnished no guidance.

Seeing, then, that the once state had disappeared, Epicureanism and Stoicism agreed that a basis of life was to be sought, not in political, but in natural law. Man, the individual, had a natural right—a right amounting almost to an injunction—to fight for his own hand. And by an easy association of ideas, it was conceived that he must attempt to obtain something tangible for himself; therefore a materialistic doctrine of the external world was adopted. The natural man

perceives no more than the natural. He who cannot look beyond himself seeks his self-development in something definitely his own. But if materialism thus be the basis of this individualistic ethical theory, it is plain that the term "natural," on which it rests, may be capable of very varied interpretation in its application to humanity. This fact gave rise to the wide discrepancies between the two schools to which we now turn.

Our common use of the word "epicurean" leads us to associate the system of Epicurus with doctrines that do not fairly represent it. We suppose that this school consisted of sensualists who lived to gratify their own tastes; and we often confound Epicureanism with a theory of the means best calculated to subserve such gratification. But if the circumstances in which this system arose be examined, it will soon appear that an interpretation of the kind is neither just nor accurate. The outcry on all sides, amid the falling away of the Greek state and culture, was, Who will show us any good? To the precise nature of this desired good the Epicurean thinkers turned their attention. They held that it must be pleasure. At the same time, they were not such greenhorns as to identify pleasure with grossness. "The aim and end of all action," Epicurus himself taught, "is that we may neither suffer nor fear; when once this end is realized, all the tempest of the soul subsides, for animal nature has then no need to satisfy, nothing is wanting to the full completion of good, whether of body or soul. For we want pleasure when we feel pain at its absence; when we feel no pain, we want no pleasure. It is for this reason that we saw that pleasure is the beginning and end of a happy life." Again, and this time

even more unmistakably, Epicurus declares, "When we say that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of the libertine and the pleasures of mere enjoyment, as some critics either ignorant or antagonistic or unfriendly suppose, but the *absence of pain in the body and trouble in the mind.* For it is not drinkings and revellings . . . nor tables loaded with dainties which beget the happy life, but *sober reasoning* to discover what must be sought and avoided, and why, and to banish the fancies that have most power over men's souls." In short, the end of the good man's life is not pleasure, but serenity. Here, then, the great divergence between the Epicurean and Stoic view comes to light. For the Epicurean interpretation of the term "nature" is not, as with the Stoic, stern fortitude, but the self-possession of one's own life.

If the true aim of life thus be serenity, it is not surprising that for long centuries Epicureanism should have been the philosophy of protest. Just as Epicurus himself had lived in retirement at Athens, seeking his own ideal, so his later followers, in Greece and at Rome, tried to work out their own salvation in a career apart from state or church or culture; they attempted to make life centre in actual pleasure—in the pleasure of harmony with self. For this reason they were violently attacked, not only by those of orthodox faith, but also by politicians, and by men of culture for whom the traditional paganism was a dead letter. Accordingly, the Epicurean held that serenity was to be attained only by emancipation. To achieve pleasure—to arrive at that state of harmony with self in which the absence of pain and trouble are the chief characteristics—a man must needs free himself from

all limitations whether imposed upon him by society, by religion, or by culture. Hence the need for philosophy—which is but an activity of the self, leading, through the use of reason, to the fruition of happiness. And, as naturally, this philosophy falls into two distinct parts.

Man finds himself in the world "like a child stranded in the darkness of night." Consequently, at the outset, a theory of this universe and of man as a portion of it must be obtained. In another of its aspects, philosophy is an activity of reason that leads to happiness. So, in the second place, the manner in which man is to use his knowledge of himself and of the world so that he may obtain serenity must be explained. Epicureanism thus separates itself into *two* main quests. *First*, it gives an account of nature and man; *second*, it applies this information to each individual case with a view to showing how all may acquire happiness in the sense of serenity or harmony with self. The former is completely subordinate to the latter. Now in a materialistic system sensation is regarded as the sole criterion of reality, and all that can be known must be obtained through its medium. Touch, as Lucretius said, is *the* sense of the body, all others being but modifications of it. The universe is an aggregate of atoms, and in like manner the soul is a compound of elements. As everything is thus material and appeals to us only through the senses, it is evident that the basis of conduct must be sought in feeling. The object of ethics, consequently, must be to teach men the real nature of their feelings; to prevent them, in other words, from mistaking the lesser for the greater pleasure. This attitude receives illustration in many of Epicurus' sayings, as, for example, in the following:—"Accustom thyself in

the belief that death is nothing to us, for good and evil are only where they are felt, and death is the absence of all feeling; therefore, a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes enjoyable the mortality of life, not by adding to years an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality." It is evil to yearn for immortality, because this craving produces pain; it creates a want that can never be satisfied, and therefore subtracts from the pleasure of life. Feeling is the sole source of the difference between good and evil. The reactionary tendency of the teaching peeps out here. The aim of Plato and Aristotle was to conform to a certain ideal, say, as with the latter, the beautiful. Now an ideal implies that there is some larger body to which the individual belongs; it is but the revelation of the function of some organism —a notion, not discernible in any part, but a principle linking all the members. But because the life of the city, the chief exemplar of such an organism, had passed away, the Epicureans did not experience either its necessity or its value. For them man stands alone; he is a being who possesses certain feelings, and who, doubtless, occasionally comes into relation with his fellows. But such connections are accidental and momentary. Obligations imposed by them are in no way binding. The individual man, just because his feelings are peculiarly his own, comes to be the centre of the universe. The state of nature is the ideal condition. "A body free from pain, and a mind released from perturbations," cannot be possessed unless a man isolate himself. Self-possession constitutes the prelude to serenity when feeling is the main bar to it. The man who clearly sees this has earned the title "wise," and by his wisdom he is saved.

Stoicism, like Epicureanism, was based upon an interpretation of "nature," but upon one of a very different kind. According to Zeno and his followers the world is an aggregation of blind forces governed by a single all-pervading reason. The Stoic creed is pantheistic. The distinctive nature of man, that whereby he is differentiated from other things, lies in his possession of reason. He alone can perceive that the universe is controlled by an ever present rational principle. Seeing, then, that the possession of this special faculty is man's peculiar prerogative, it is but proper that he should set it in authority over lower elements. No doubt he has physical appetites; but these belong to the animals also. A human being ought so to manage that reason may control the passions. To live according to nature is to live according to reason. But, like their contemporaries, the Stoics were also individualists. Each man must be ruled by his own reason. Nay more, not only is he cut off from his neighbors, but, in his life, acts are separable from one another. Merit and award are distributed according to the good or evil intent of the act. No gradation is possible. All vices are of the same degree of badness, for all are due to the presence of unreason in the soul; but "the wise man is absolutely perfect, lord of himself and master of the world." Nor does the disintegrating influence of the decline of the city-state cease here. The wise man is not simply an individual, having a life of his own to live for himself, he is not restricted by any binding ties of race and country. He is bound to carve out his own career in his own way and for his own ends.

The Stoic philosophy is thus by its own confession entirely an affair of practice. And so the question comes to be, By what means may a man

most successfully secure inward peace of mind and happiness? This problem is, obviously, an ethical one, and an explanation of the world can be useful only in so far as it subserves the ends of morality. Or, to use the words of Posidonius, the Stoic, "Logic is the shell, physics the white, and ethics the yolk." The treatment of nature forms an introduction to the consideration of man. Matter is passive, and into it all motion proceeds; force is active, it is the working, moving power. The two cannot be separated. The universe turns out to be a perfectly fixed, eternal order of phenomena. In it each thing has a certain office to fulfil. Thus the thing or person which best fills its place will be virtuous—that is to say, it will be reasonable, and so attain the highest good. In the light of such a theory it is but a step from nature to man, and the analogy between them can be readily worked out. As in the order of the phenomenal world everything is submissive to one great overruling power, so ought it to be in the life of the individual. The passions are the sole disturbers here; reason is the ruler. This plainly implies that reason is able, and bound, to stamp the passions out. It was because the Stoics started from the logical position that force could be known only in relation to matter, and good in relation to evil, that, when they came to treat of life, the antithesis between reason and passion emerged. "Reason," says Seneca, "is nothing else than a part of the divine spirit immersed in the human body." Accordingly, it must develop through all its stages without let or hindrance. Hence greatest importance is to be attached to its growth in every case. With each man, reason becomes the sole standard of virtuous action. "For man, the blessed life consists

in the perfection of his reason, which alone can render him self-dependent and superior to the assaults of fortune; which imparts a perception of all truth, and gives order, moderation, and dignity in action, a will harmless and benignant, at once lovable and admirable. . . . This is the life of virtue which is the only good." If man be thus constituted by nature, it follows that a very specific account of his ethical life can be given. And it may be said that, to all intents and purposes, the Stoic ethics are summed up in two propositions. Virtue consists in conformity to nature; this virtue is sufficient for happiness.

We have already seen that nature is a complex of matter and the force of reason which sweeps through it. There is thus a certain fate in the universe. Or, as one of the Stoics puts it, "Fate leads us on, and what of time remains for each of us the first hour of our birth allotted. . . . A long time ago it was appointed you what you should rejoice over, what you should weep over. . . . Cause depends upon cause . . . nothing happens, but it comes." The supreme duty of the wise man is to submit himself to this order. Virtue consists in this submission. It begins, as I think Zeller pointed out, with that acknowledgment of the fact of a rational order which the wise man alone can apprehend; it ends with a willing submission to the course of this order, an obedience which the wise man alone can render. But, secondly, virtue is sufficient for happiness—that is, only in submission to the course of nature is true happiness to be found. The highest good is the "harmony of the soul." Happiness thus comes to be that harmony of the soul which arises from a perfect understanding of its own behests, and a complete compliance with them. Reason is here a law to

itself, and the life it inspires is, by consequence, a career of complete conformity with the nature of the rational order of the universe. The wise man must of necessity eschew all passion. This implies the renunciation of pleasure. Pleasure depends upon mere external considerations, while real virtue is an end in itself. This definition of virtue is one of the most important and distinctive Stoic doctrines. Although virtue may bring happiness, it must be sought entirely for its own sake. The moment one seeks it for the happiness it offers, it ceases to be virtue. "You mistake when you ask, what is that for the sake of which I seek virtue? Herself; for she has nothing better; she is her own reward." Or, as the Stoics put it in one of their most famous paradoxes, "Not to need happiness is happiness." All true good is consequently internal. On this view, even the loss of every earthly blessing, nay, death itself, may be made subservient to happiness. "The ills of life," as another of the paradoxes runs, "are not ills, except to those who bear them ill." Further, the very evils of life may be goods. The cleverest scholars set themselves the hardest tasks, the bravest soldiers receive the most perilous positions, so it is by favor of the universal reason that a man is selected to suffer the wounds inflicted by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. "Prosperity is primarily to the mass, to those of low talents." "Never to have been miserable," as another paradox runs, "is to be miserable."

But within the individual himself there is a certain element which militates against the attainment of this conformity to nature—against this virtue with its attendant happiness. In man's being, as has already been shown, a schism prevails, just as there is the division between matter

and reason in the physical world. In human nature, reason and passion ever confront one another. Passion it is that vitiates life; it cannot coexist with a reasonable view of things. The passions, with their vain imaginations concerning the present and future of existence, cause all pleasures and desires, all ills and cares and fears. From this notion there results, not only the division of man's nature into two unrelated halves, but also the Stoic reduction of virtue to a merely theoretical level, it becomes purely internal and individualistic; that is to say, it can never be put to practical use in life. For if a man is to pursue his duty, he must eliminate the adverse element, and this is various in each. "What can be better for us who have received a rational nature," writes Seneca, "than reason. . . . All things, therefore, are to be made light of and borne with tranquil mind." Harmony with self and with the world-order, indifference, calmness in all circumstances, these are the features of the Stoic ideal. But realization of it implies conditions, and so the problem comes to be, What are the conditions of the perfect life? They may be summarized as four in number. First, the passions must be rooted out. Second, a man must retire from social life with its numerous absorbing cares. Third, he must school himself to hardness, he must become an ascetic. "We must be accustomed to remove ourselves," says a Stoic who, curiously enough was a millionaire, "from all display . . . to restrain all luxury, to govern our appetites, to measure things by their use, not by their ornament. Wealth must not be sought. An amount but little removed from poverty, and far removed from riches, so that our independence shall not be sacrificed on the one hand, nor our vanity

tempted on the other, is to be the limit of our wishes." Lastly, "we must withdraw the mind, we must live within ourselves." For only thus will the sage be undisturbed by the whims of Fortune. And if the worst come to the worst, and the sage by living "forfeit his independence," the door stands open, "life is easily taken."

Bearing in mind, then, that Epicureanism and Stoicism were the chief *constructive* theories upon which the ancient world relied before the advent of Christianity, we must ask, How about the sufficiency, the availableness, of their "gospels"?

In Epicurus' own teaching pleasure sinks to the level of a means, or rather, follows as a result of a man's proper conduct of his life. In short, it is synonymous with a certain aggregate of conditions; it implies a serene state of body and mind such as can be attained only by shaking free from the demands which society and individuals make upon character. Accordingly, the teaching may be summed up by saying that pleasure is to be identified with happiness; that happiness reposes upon freedom; and that freedom is open only to the wise man who, in his wisdom, knows how to obtain it. The aim of the system is so to guide a man that he may be wise, and thus become aware how to arrive at mastery over the means to happiness. "Greeks seek after wisdom." By taking thought they would add a cubit to their stature, by searching they would achieve a godlike calm, if not God Himself. Freedom depends upon that living which is "an art in some degree peculiar and special to each individual." Accordingly, to acquire it, one must, preëminently, gain insight —insight into the circumstances of his own per-

sonality. When this condition has been realized, and only then, can a man be said to be alive. The kind of person who can arrive at this success is the "wise man"; he who, in clear consciousness of all that he is doing, subordinates every consideration to the attainment of freedom, and through it of a negative happiness consisting in the absence of disturbance. The title is not bestowed upon him because he is good, but because he knows how to live. When he has become fully aware that there is nothing to disturb him, then he is *de facto* in harmony with self. So living, he has earned the fruition of that great peace which flows from a continuous limitation of self in such a way that nothing can enter in and create disturbance. The serenity of life is its goodness. Not morality, not self-sacrifice, not interest in the good, but unruffled calm, seclusion, anxiety for completed selfhood are the marks of the wise one. Because he is happy, he is virtuous; if he were a prey to fears, his viciousness would stand completely proved.

Apart altogether from its plain inadequacy as a gospel, apart too from its appeal to that limited class who can enjoy the requisite opportunities for the necessary quest, it is easy to see that this strange teaching was self-contradictory. The pleasure or happiness, the freedom, the wise man do not exist in human experience, for the excellent reason that they cannot. A separated personality is an inherent impossibility. Independence, in the sense of isolation from fellow-men and from the world, cannot be viewed as other than a mere figment of the imagination. Our freedom can be obtained only along with the freedom of others; happiness can be enjoyed only by the man who knows how to unite with his neighbors; individuality in all its fulness can

grow to its perfect stature only in a social medium, with its duties that are necessarily attendant upon rights. Eliminate all needs, discard all social relations, and you may indeed develop independence. But, in the nature of the case, it is a mere name. It contains nothing, turns out to be a form without substance; so empty is it that one may baptize it what one pleases. Make a desert and call it peace, if you will, but almost any title will fit. In the same way, happiness which is no more than self-dependence, contradicts itself. The freedom of the Epicurean consists in a removal of all restrictions, and is therefore identical with a permission to be nowhere. The complete command over life which results from a soul limited to itself turns out to be a bare delusion. Little wonder, then, that despair should often have marked those who clung to it for comfort, and that escape from self, in a series of momentary pleasures, should have frequently supplemented or distorted the original teaching. All that it promised proved to be shadowy, all that it led distracted humanity to hope for was found to be hollow, and so moral suicide, in the shape of debauchery, or *felo de se*, came to be the logical consequences of perceiving that the highest conceivable career open to man was a mere void—something so deceptive as to be unworthy of pursuit. To "live hidden" may be an excellent motto for one whose life is already a hopeless failure, it is worse than no direction for those who realize that man's chief characteristic centres in his possession of a soul that *must* be saved. And the ancient world gradually came to see that this resource was of no avail.

The school of Zeno was more scientific, more anxious to prove systematically that the nature of

the world and man is such that it is good for one to be alone. Lacking the flexibility of Epicureanism, it started with a first principle which could be applied in every case. To attain the ideal of independence—always contemplated by the wise man—it is of the last importance "to live according to nature." Stoicism thus reposes on an imaginative account of nature as a process of a reason supposed to be universally operative. The order of the world exhibits its chief trait in its changelessness. And when this has been fully fathomed, a man cannot but be convinced that one definite line of conduct remains open to him. *Self*-control grows directly from *self*-persuasion that this universe is one orderly whole, proceeding on its way undeflected by aught that happens. To perceive this, and to rise superior to the changefulness of phenomena, is a man's highest mission. When he has the necessary insight, he is in a position to subdue all the ills that flesh is heir to, and so to control his career that they cannot touch or harm in all his holy mountain.

But the question comes to be, How is this independence to be gained? The answer was, as we saw, By the extinction of passion. The passions are the great enemies of that rational perception which alone enables a human being to rise to the dignity of his nature by placing himself in line with the reason that governs all things. They disturb harmony, or, as the common phrase runs, they get between a man and his wits. One must therefore deny himself all the opportunities that life affords, he must denude his being of all the conditions that usually lead to action, for thus, and only thus, will his reason have free course. Like Epicureanism, this doctrine both overbalances itself and fails to furnish

a gospel suited for the mass. How are the father, the mother, the child, the dutiful citizen, the soldier, and so forth to retire into a passionless self? How are all the occasions that go to make up a human life to be blotted out? How are the vast majority of the human race to put themselves in a position whence they can develop a career of contemplation? The thing is impossible. Once more, when a man has grown to wisdom, when he knows how to remain within the charmed circle of a purely rational self, into what does he retire? With the soul swept and garnished—delivered from obligations to neighbors, from bodily impulse, from those endless interests wherein life is so rich, what is left? Plainly nothing. The moment he gains unity with the world-reason, the wise man finds that his agreement is with a shade. Having emptied himself of everything that makes life life, he can but fall into despair. Indifference, not action, turns out to be the end for which he has worked; he may, therefore, contemplate and actually carry out suicide as a means of escape from the void, to reach which he has sacrificed everything. Nay, he must do so. For no human being can, in the nature of the case, complete the process of extirpation except in death. The self cannot be selfless till personality have been utterly destroyed. The strength of such a system lay, of course, in its protest against the follies and foibles of the age. It was effective as a criticism, but not as a constructive gospel. It showed men many wrongs, forced them to realize many stupidities. But it remained negative just where positive instruction was most required, till at length, as we shall see, some of the positive characteristics of Roman civilization came to react upon it. To be informed that all ills flow from a preordained collocation of circumstances,

and to know that this assemblage could not have been altered, does not help to assuage the ills that are. And to inform a man that he must eliminate his passions in order to conform to these conditions, does not aid him to render his life concentric to a new ideal and so to transform the baser to worthier ends—the great secret of Christianity—but rather induces him to evade the life that now is.

From whatever standpoint one views it, salvation by wisdom was a failure. Attainable only by the wise and favored of the earth, it fell short of that immediate and universal fitness on which all influential teachings repose; it furnished no new guide to a course of action in a specific set of circumstances; it laid down abstract rules for a life which, whatever it may be, is certainly not open to human beings. Setting out to explain man's complex nature, it merely invented another, a simple nature, by expelling one group of the elements with which it found itself confronted. The central truth is that the individualistic schools, being limited by the conditions of their time, failed to fathom the meaning and implications of personality. This error is common to them with the whole of classical civilization. They forced men to experience their "natural rights," but they could not picture the duties which these rights entail. Attenuated by the demands of the city-state, and by their spirit which still survived the fall of the Greek polities, the worth of a human soul, its depth, richness, and complexity could not then appear. Much less could even the wisest of the day, with the resources at their command, point the way to the perfect life. Having stripped the citizen of all that had rendered him notable as an organic portion of a community, the new schools sought to

find another career for him; but a career cannot be made out of negatives. They failed to perceive that a fresh start imperatively demands that fresh initiative which only an entirely changed conception of life—a transformed ideal of the scope and meaning of manhood—is sufficient to originate. Seeking to free men from the ills of the age, they but liberated them from one evil to place them under the dominion of another. So their wise man remained a mere conception; their doctrines fell short of profound effect, because they rendered humanity, miserable enough already, too poverty-stricken. They took away from it even that which it had. And without civic place, without a free personality, nothing remained but consistent despair or complete contempt for a life that asked so much and could repay with so little. By an acme of self-contradiction, the career which is so worthy may easily be ended. The deaths of Zeno, Cleanthes, Empedocles, Cato Minor, of Seneca and others prove how strangely the reality conflicted with the ideal. And necessarily so. Complacency, masquerading as a gospel, inevitably contradicts itself, for, when it becomes missionary, men realize that the reasons for its existence have already disappeared.

CHAPTER V

THE MISSION OF THE JEWS

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God."—ROM. iii. 1, 2.

THE transition from Hellenic to Jewish civilization brings us at a single step from strange to familiar ground. Nor is the homelike feeling we experience due entirely to the causes that most readily suggest themselves. Not our familiarity with the narratives of the Old Testament, not our close acquaintance with the Ten Commandments, not our admiration for the poetry of Job, our sense of the appropriateness of many Psalms to our own circumstances, not even all these taken together originate this sentiment of kinship. The real fact is that, as a great gulf is fixed between Christianity and the Jewish religion from one point of view, another, and greater, yawns between these religions and all the faiths of the pagan world. Amid the Jews we meet, not merely what we know—thanks to our familiarity with their sacred books—but our spiritual kith and kin. In approaching any one of the other pre-Christian religions we find ourselves compelled to unmake our whole experience, and so we are never quite sure that we obtain the necessary perspective; after all our efforts, the pagan worships remain far from us, their atmosphere is so completely different. Nothing enables us to re-

alize this more vividly than the attitude of the Græco-Roman world toward Jews and Christians alike. It showed equal incapacity to understand either; and it is in the formative qualities common to both, which thus blinded later classical civilization, that the inner relation between the two spiritual religions is to be sought. This total incapacity of the Græco-Roman world to compass Judaism and Christianity was most typically embodied in the epithet "atheist" impartially applied to both. In the time of the Roman Empire, when antagonistic peoples had so far become one as to cease from war, they could appreciate, if by no more than a thoughtless acquiescence, the conception of friendliness or indifference between the gods of various races. But in lurid contrast to the "crowd of deities," satirized by the poet Juvenal, stood Jehovah, above all because beyond all. His worshippers did not represent Him—they could not show their God—and so they must needs be atheists. Moreover, Jehovah claimed to be the only true God, and His people, themselves unable to perceive the elements of good in paganism, withdrew from the unclean thing, so earning the universal contempt and hatred of Cæsar's subjects. Precisely the same held true of Christianity, and the causes were identical—they lay in the very nature of the religions themselves. Both equally centred in ideals which had never entered into the pagan consciousness. These were incalculable by the Roman citizen, for he possessed no measure whereby he might have appraised them. Further, man's well-known admiration for what he imperfectly understands easily passes over into hatred, and in this case the transformation was inevitable. For the pagan knew by experience that the operation of these two faiths led their devotees to

contemplate purposes which he could in nowise fathom, and to take for uttermost reality much that he deemed quite chimerical. Why not worship the Emperor? Why not cheerfully enter into the whole round of those social observances wherein religious custom played so large a part? What solid ground could there possibly be for refraining from exercises which the cultivated knew for mere forms, which the masses loved on account of their material accompaniments? No distributions of corn! No displays in the amphitheatre! The thing was monstrous! So to the pagan mind Jew and Christian came under a common condemnation, for they had *religious*, not simply *moral*, reasons for preferring death to apostasy. Moral grounds the Stoics and others could have apprehended, but religious scruples of this kind originated in another sphere which, being out of their reckoning, seemed wholly fantastic. It might be a palliation of Jewish folly, as Tacitus thought, that such accursed habits had descended from uncultured ancestors; the Christian had no such extenuation to plead. Yet, despite this difference, both were on the same footing when it came to a succinct statement of their misdeeds. Did they not alike evince "a hatred of the human race"? Yes, the religion of the Jews is familiar to us, because it is a religion, because alone among the pre-Christian faiths it deals with God. The mission of the Hebrews in universal history was to originate and preserve in purity the conception of the one God who is the Lord of the whole earth.

Religion as we moderns know it, while a highly complex thing viewed from the psychological or individual side, becomes even more complicated when regarded from a universal or race standpoint. At least four life-streams commingle in

it. From Greece it largely derives the conception of God's manifestation in the universe; from Rome, the idea of God's identical relation to all men everywhere; from Teutonic character, the importance of God's connection with every man apart; from the Jews, God Himself. And Hebrew prophecy supplied the means whereby this consciousness first fully developed itself. It set forth the explicit recognition of God as God.

The attempt to trace, even in outline, Jewish progress in its most characteristic sphere, religion, would be out of place here. We are to deal only with the essential contribution. Yet it ought to be noted that the problem presents a very curious and instructive parallel to that of Greek culture which has just been before us. The debt to Hellenic civilization under which the world labors has too often been obscured by the judgments of Roman writers who, just because they stood so near some Greeks, cannot be implicitly trusted. Tacitus and the rest mistook the Hellenistic for the Hellenic. Consequently, to arrive at a just estimate, one must go back to a time when the Greeks had not as yet become conscious of the worth of a human being, to a period when that universal spirit, which made Plato and Aristotle in a manner the only true philosophers before Spinoza, had not entered upon the stages of clear disintegration in the teaching of Zeno and Epicurus, and of obscurer transformation in the Græco-Roman, semi-Platonic, and Græco-Jewish schools. The "fleeting moment" of the realization of the Hellenic ideal was so fleeting, as we have seen, that it is hard to stop it, just at such and such a point, for purposes of detailed examination. The fervent city patriotism of Pericles, and the more judicial, but still semi-enthusiastic, reflections of Thucyd-

ides, perhaps mirror it best. For an all too brief hour, city and citizens were completely attuned. There was no state except in the citizens, no citizens save as organically related to the state.

Precisely the same holds true of the Jews when one approaches their immortal past. By our very affinity for them we have tended to depreciate them. Judaism has frequently been taken at its lowest, in the bickering sects of the time of Christ, and so its absolute value in the sequence of religious evolution has come to be evaporated. We forget that "God's ancient people" were God's, and that the promise "to the Jew first" still remains true. There has been a strong tendency toward supposing that the variety of attitude toward Jehovah, illustrated in the Hebrew Bible, could be most characteristically expressed in one way, and in one way only. The individuality of God, hermetically sealed up within himself, and so cut off increasingly from man and from the universe, has been the too exclusive representation of many. The insignificance of man, the utter insignificance of isolated personality, and the judgment that the earth is a very little thing, are the deductions usually drawn from this view. Gloominess and lack of attention to the wonder and beauty of nature, are often supposed to mark the religion. So, too, formalism is held to reign supreme. The means to worship became the end, and thus touch with God was lost. Conviction of the worthlessness of life accordingly ensued, and man was cast back upon his own resources in utter helplessness and hopelessness. In other words, simply because it stands so near to the religion of the Jews, Christian opinion has identified it too exclusively with the broken fragments that sur-

rounded our Lord, in the shape of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the rest. This is a great error. It will not suffice to assume that the teaching of the "straitest sect of the Pharisees" stood for the religious attitude of a whole people, any more than it would be just to infer that the enormities of Roman emperors and their favorites exhausted the moral phenomena of the later classical world. Despair—the absence of ideals—finding momentary anodynes in cant and hypocrisy, was not the only feature of the nation whom Titus broke in pieces after that desperate resistance. Rather fanaticism of race, based on a deeply justifiable sense of superiority, betrayed the predominant temperament; and it is precisely in the roots of this mastering conviction—a conviction that still energizes in some sort the Western world over—that we must seek the ultimate significance of all that the Jews accomplished for the extension of man's spiritual insight. The crucifixion of Christ might be called a practical paradox, one of those ironical situations in history which are ironical by the fact that in a circumscribed case they reveal universal principles that inevitably reverse the meaning of the isolated occurrence. If the Law slew God, the Crucifixion brought Him to life again.

How, then, did the mission of the Jews reveal itself? Where must we lay it to our account to discover *the* contribution made by this marvelous people to the cause of universal righteousness?

Historical personages, semi-mythical occurrences, and heroes before Agamemnon there were ere Athens, at one stroke, rose to the heights of her splendor, her power, and her deathless glory. Similarly, before the prophets uttered their burning words, judges, Moses in his idealized atmosphere, the half-legendary Abraham

and his mighty ancestors of the Mesopotamian valley, had fought their fight. But the uniqueness of Israel, all that her people were destined to achieve for the world's advance, lies enshrined in the visions of these sad, heroic seers. They gathered up Israel, the nation, in themselves, just as Pericles and Plato were, hardly persons, but rather the living embodiment of operative ideals. They voiced they knew not what; for they, and they only, found permanent expression for the thoughts of the dumb thousands whose hearts leaped within them as they heard echoed back their own inmost yearnings. Changes, too, emerged, traceable even in the magnificent apostolic succession. To Deutero-Isaiah the ideal has become an object of reflection—something so definite as to be almost surprised into superior perfection still—just as for Plato the aroma of Greek civilization, although the breath of his nostrils, seemed to be escaping into free air; its very value impressed him with the urgent necessity for providing new means of preservation. Yet, notwithstanding the Exile and the plain influence of Persian religion, Deutero-Isaiah remains a herald of typical Jewish ideals, in the same way as Plato is of Greek, despite the Peloponnesian war and the uprising of the faction or sectarian spirit destined so soon to ruin all. With Malachi, as with Aristotle, the vivifying conceptions stand bathed in the light of the afterglow. It avails nothing in either case to seek permanent constructive traits in the individualist schools—Epicureans, Stoics—composed of men desiring escape from the invasions of a fate that had swept off their once all-satisfying civic vocation, or in the equally individualist sects—Pharisees, Sadducees—debating on a personal immortality that had long been implicitly assured by the infinite

nature of men made in the image of a truly infinite God, whose service gave them the perfect national freedom which lent them all the worth they possessed. The Greek developed his genius in joy, the Jew in misfortune; and in both instances alike it was not an individual's happiness or an individual's sorrow that availed. The city dowered her citizen with her delights; the nation poured her ills upon the dwellers in Judea. When Greek and Jew knew themselves, and developed an isolated personality, joy lost its charm, suffering missed its lesson. To the prophets, then, we must go, and go with open ear, willing to hear ere essaying to judge.

At the outset it is to be remembered that what is called prophecy must be regarded as a ubiquitous phenomenon. It was no special possession of the Jews, not even of the Semitic races collectively. The magicians of Chaldea, the wise men of Egypt, the various ascetics of Hindustan, the soothsayers of Philistia, the "prophets of Baal," all come under the description. In Greece, where the records are fuller, and our acquaintance more intimate, perhaps more sympathetic, its recurrence is familiar and often sensibly influential. So much so that Plato—whose business as a philosopher was to explain all aspects of life—devotes special attention to it in his most apocalyptic dialogue, and sharply distinguishes the office of diviner from that of prophet. "No man, when in his senses, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled by sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession. And he who would understand what he remembers to have said, whether in dream or when he was awake, by the prophetic and enthusiastic nature, or what he has seen, must

recover his senses; and then he will be able to explain rationally what all such words and such apparitions mean, and what indications they afford to this man or that of past, present, or future good and evil. But while he continues demented he cannot judge of the visions which he sees or of the words which he utters; the ancient saying is very true, that 'only a man in his senses can act or judge about himself and his own affairs.' And for this reason it is customary to appoint diviners or interpreters as discerners of the oracles of the gods. Some persons call them prophets; they do not know that they are only readers of dark sayings and visions, and are not to be called prophets at all, but only interpreters of prophecy." One must conclude, accordingly, that Hebrew prophecy is important, not because it is prophecy, but on account of its peculiar features. Being distinctive or unique, it brought a new element, one not otherwise contributed, to the spiritual heritage of humanity.

Like all other great men, the prophets were in one sense products of their time. Assyria and Babylon moved them to utterance, Israel furnished the theme. Yet, on the other hand, they returned double for all they had received. Their own personality overflowed the inrushing influences, and, transforming them to a new purpose, wrought something entirely individual, something at once strange and familiar. The great succession from Amos to Malachi did not bring forth a single philosopher. No attempt to theorize the deity appeared, no effort to regard His nature and His relation to His people from a speculative vantage-ground stands recorded. The pervading genius was entirely religious, never metaphysical. In other words, intuition rather than reflection furnished the source whence the divine afflatus

poured out. The materials which Israel generated, so to speak, afforded nothing to rationalize; there was much, very much, to tell. Hence the prophets cannot be said to have found their vocation in foretelling. Their winged words witness to the constant interaction of three main factors, factors that have ever effectually energized in mighty spirits. From the *present* they cast back glances to the *past*, but not with blurred vision, nor to the entire past. By one flash of insight the abiding is disengaged from the transient. Thus enlightened, the seers yearn themselves into the *future*. And in some such experience of unfathomable need their telling transfigures itself into foretelling. For, according as understanding of past and present deepens, so is wisdom for guidance in the future. The central hopes did of a verity find realization, because the central fears were so trebly grounded, and because the single remedy stood in such clear light. Out of a tremendous faith a real Deity sprang into effectual being, and as the same faith underwent rejuvenescence from time to time, the Jews contrived to lay an everlasting burden upon mankind—to fulfil all that had been told; and an irredeemable debt—perception of the sole conditions of fulfilment.

All this the prophets arrived at by way of the nation. To allege that they stated nothing more than their own particular impressions, is like accounting for Shakespeare's men and women by urging that they were his creations out of nothing, limited by his own hermetically sealed ideas. As Assyria and Babylon smote, the Jews lost themselves, and instinctively clung together for safety at first, then for comfort. The prophets revealed the inner principle of this association. Jehovah was not their particular deity, but the

God of the whole earth, whose ways they closely traced, whose fundamental purposes they divined, whose near rule stirred their finest aspirations. No word manifested him to them; no familiar spirit whispered his intimations in their ears; they sketched no scheme of warlike operations for mundane victory and deliverance. All equally bodied forth a common national experience, all alike superadded to this, though in varying degrees, a penetrating judgment upon the nature of man as primarily a moral and religious being. Through them the crucifixion of Israel transformed the "chosen people" into the Messiah among all nations. And in this stupendous fact—which the Crucifixion completely obscured at the moment, and still largely conceals—we must perforce seek the final inwardness of Judaism. Above all, it is essential, in trying to appraise the Jewish genius, to put away Greek philosophical conceptions. For, armed with them, we are certain to fail in our estimate or to do injustice; precisely as, were we to approach the Greek genius with Hebraic presuppositions, we should inevitably misunderstand Hellenic paganism *in toto*, and Roman legalism in part.

The prophets, then, perceived once and for ever that man's highest humanity centres in and converges upon deity. Not, however, upon a tribal god, but upon the God of the whole earth. By intuition they attained what Plato half-poetically thought, what Plutarch most pathetically longed for and attempted to build up out of the beggarly elements that lay scattered confusedly around in the first Christian century. Nor can this religious intuition of theirs be regarded as a bare piece of unorganized sentiment. Such was its mastering power that it immediately, if unconsciously, enlisted the eager services of will

and reason. The ideal, felt at first, became clear with almost perfect clearness by the interaction of reason, and gained a consecration, equalled only in some of the finest Christian lives, by the operation of will. If men who are men cannot but weep together and triumph together over the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, they cannot but perceive the truth of the fifty-fifth as to-day realized fact: "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee;" they cannot but work together for the building into life of that city of God which, though still the one far off divine event, first entered into the human heart through the hidden wisdom of Isaiah of Babylon. So working, too, his promise holds good for all even in this widely different generation: "They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The *rationale* of the religion of Israel, the contribution it has rendered to universal spiritual growth, cannot be evaporated by any subtlety of metaphysic or of criticism from the old, old promise—itself a prophecy, because of its strange and marvelously suggestive fulfilment: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Thus the central import of the Jewish religion, when it is brought to occupy its place in the

developing whole of the providential scheme, does not lie in any metaphysical estimate of its logical quality. To label the Jews "legalistic," and so to convict them of religious incapacity, is not far removed from the amiable delusion of the Greeks, that they must be irreligious. Logical they were not, as we occidentals understand logic; yet they had unexampled consistency, and in the measure of this lies the root of their universally meaningful doings. Their eternal message—the unity of God and the oneness of real manhood with Him—transcends our philosophical and logical makeshifts altogether. For Judaism is not to be estimated in terms of its apparent close in the groups of bickering secretaries, but by that portion of it, once its all in all, which to-day lives as an essential element in even the most Christian character, and must ever continue thus vitally energizing. The veritable revelation impressed upon heathen civilization at the time of the Dispersion may, indeed, have ceased to be a revelation now. But this is traceable to its character as originally such. It has been incorporated in a larger life, and persists as an indispensable element in that more spacious revelation ever manifesting itself from age to age in the deeds of all the world's true workers. The conclusion of the whole matter occurs in a phrase familiar enough: "The word of the God of Israel endureth forever." A word spoken, no doubt, in many ways, but a God first fully comprehended by the prophets and finally revealed by the spiritual insight of their spoken word.

While this interpretation might be further emphasized and variously illustrated by reference to the Psalms and to the Messianic expectation, did space permit, a few remarks regarding its in-

fluence on the view we must take of the Law may be permitted.

A life thus reposing upon explicit recognition of the authority of a holy God could not fail to be of moral, as well as of religious, import. Unlike Greek ethics, Jewish morality issues from self-denial, even though the self be identified with the "chosen" people. So, after a sort, Hebrew "legalism" was never really legalistic; for it depended upon a perception that the earth is the Lord's. Morality, that is, operates in no finite world, but by its very nature partakes essentially in the divine. At its worst, Judaism imposes endless ceremonial detail, striving to attain the divine by a *progressus ad infinitum;* at its best it envisages the spirit of the one code that testifies to the secret source of moral purity. In the former case, individualistic or sectarian tendencies hold mastery; in the latter, national. Or, to put it otherwise, the legalism which so many Christians frequently associate with Judaism—ceremonialism—is not characteristic or representative any more than Cynicism was typical of Athenian ethical teaching. It is not so much Jewish as specifically bound up with some Jewish sects. Whereas true legalism is not in this sense legalistic, but constitutes the codified expression of an inner national perception in ethics, a perception that the Jews themselves never altogether lost,—one, too, that Western civilization never altogether gained till after the Reformation, even if it can be said to have grasped it now. In a spiritual regard, the Jew was the lawgiver to the universe, as was the Roman juridically; for he had achieved the height whence he could see that no genuine morality is possible apart from a certain attitude of heart. From prophetic times his moral as-

sociations were *the* associations apart from which morality in fulness cannot exist. So much so, that men who prate about moral advance in these days are but slowly recovering what the Jews always had. And this ethical insight which renders the Jew the moral revealer, as well as the God-giver, to humanity was intimately bound up with Israel's contribution to religious advance.

Selfishness it is that separates between God and man. Through man's falling away to self-regard, evils smite the people. For this same selfishness is the divider between a man and his better self, and especially between men and their neighbors. To this truth the Law, in its first purity, gave expression. Men learn to escape this danger in proportion as they remember the profound reasons for honoring father and mother, for respecting the rights of fellows. In brief, the organic connection between rights and duties becomes plain. The Ten Commandments set forth a solidarity of human interest, convey an explicit recognition of the interdependence between the individual and his social environment, which the modern world at this late hour begins to acclaim as if it were a new evangel. And this, be it noted, is the characteristic legalism of the Jews—a moral purity, not a ceremonial rectitude. Here, then, Jewish ethics have gifted something eminently tangible to the moral stock of mankind at large. The ethical influence, indeed, may be nowise comparable with the religious, and therefore may not always receive adequate recognition. At the same time, the two are inseparable. Through his God-consciousness, the Jew, first of all men, rose to a conception of morality which savored nothing of self-culture, self-shaping, self-sufficiency, but everything of that self-denial and self-abasement wherein a people sent up a shudder-

ing sob from the depths of sin to the heights of realization and perfection whereon its God sat enthroned. This is the permanent lesson of the so-called "legalism," and it must be learned by all men the world over. Jewish ceremonialism was, in truth, transitory; Jewish "legalism" is eternal, for in it man first perceived, and in one way finally perceived, why the universe of morality is identical in principle with the wider worlds of humanity and nature which, together with it, constitute the organic whole known as human experience.

To disengage the mission of the Jews from the incidents of history which often lead off to side issues, it were well to remember that even the visions of prophets, sentimental as they may sometimes seem, often suggest truths that even the subtlest reasoning is apt to miss. The insight of Ezekiel, mere dream as it appears, affords an excellent starting-point for calculation of the debt owed by universal religion and morals to a despised, misunderstood, and rejected community. "And it shall come to pass, that every living creature which swarmeth, in every place whither the rivers shall come, shall live; . . . and everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh." This river flows from Jerusalem, "the Mother of us all."

As the mission of the Jews was distinctively religious, so too was their genius. And it may be well to inquire, by way of conclusion, what the exact implications of this statement are. It is the more necessary to weigh the question because tendencies to confuse it with other considerations are by no means uncommon.

A man's view of the world, like his interpretation of human life, may be dominated by one, or by a combination, of three main interests,

each of which presents special features that clearly mark it off from the others. Science, Philosophy, Religion form this trio. The supreme function of Science is to resolve physical effects into physical causes. In the language of Science, a phenomenon is held to be "explained" when the assemblage of antecedent conditions that produce it is fully understood, and the inter-relationship of all completely laid bare. Science, therefore, points to the presence of an outer world, supposed to be cut off from mind. Philosophy, while cognate with Science as an attempt to understand the reasons why such and such events occur, is differentiated by the emphasis which it lays upon the presence, power, and operation of mind. It refuses to contemplate the possibility of two universes—a mental and a physical—each proceeding on its way in total disregard of the other. Here the search comes to be, not for causes, but for underlying principles, in the absence of which even physical antecedents that suffice to explain the occurrence of phenomena would not be comprehensible by the human intellect. The one discipline concentrates itself upon "matter," the other upon "reason." So far they differ, and sometimes even collide. But they agree in a certain indifference to explanations which human nature might conceivably *wish* to be true or sufficient. Or, if you choose so to put it, they ignore desire, affection, and will. Religion, on the contrary, centres conspicuously just in these elements. "God made man in his own image." Man, to be man, must be a person; and personality is of the essence, not perhaps of God as "very God," but assuredly of God as He stands revealed to us. Deity ruling in the realm represented by man's highest ideals, in the one sphere where his

most cherished hopes can be realized; Deity sanctioning and requiring observance of those moral duties and religious obligations without which the divine or holy life cannot grow from more to more upon this earth; Deity as Himself embodying all that men have conceived of perfection and an infinity beyond—these are the operative conceptions with which the very existence of religion cannot but be bound up.

With all this in remembrance, the point particularly to be noted is that the Jews alone of pre-Christian peoples rose to a realization of all that is implied in religion; and although this appreciation came to be distorted and stunted in the course of history, it was and must always remain adequate in principle. With them, the master wrong was not the error of the scientific man, not the false logic of the philosopher, but that sense of sin, of personal defect or falling away, which presupposes a will able to act righteously, and a righteous God pointing the more excellent way, and giving systematic warning about the inevitable consequences of unfaithfulness. Needless to say, the sense of sin is in direct ratio to the standard whereby it must be judged, and this, in turn, stands most intimately associated with the kind of deity revealed to man. When the god is a mere idealized human being, as with the Greeks, a tendency to invest him with the faults, even with the peccadillos and foibles, of his worshipper, makes itself manifest, and with disastrous results. If the deity be but an abstract quality, or a supervisor of certain special relations in life, he sits loose to character as a whole, or a mere bribe suffices to enlist his interference at the appropriate junctures. In all cases equally, conviction of sin cannot come to maturity. But Jehovah was a

personal God, possessed of distinctive characteristics through and through, holiness being chiefest among them. He already was all that man could hope, or ought, to be. His guardianship and approval were the one thing needful for reality of life. His perfection induced a deep-seated appreciation of the fact that even man's best could not but be bad. Yet, through the medium of religion, even such a God can, and does, coöperate with man. And so the most self-abased people the world has ever seen was also the most optimistic. For if this God were on their side, who could prevail against them? Nay, despite history, who has prevailed against them?

Thus the mission of the Jews was to contribute to humanity an adequate conception of God, and a vivid perception of the conditions under which alone pure religion can exist. They saw, once for all, that personal holiness provides the sole productive environment of happiness. For to them a man's chief end is to be as perfectly righteous as God. The Deity and His worshipper appear as persons, as willing agents, working with one another in unity of purpose for escape from sin and progress in righteousness. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Here is a solution of religious problems that comes very near being final. The method of creation truly was not yet, but Creator and created are both apprehended from what is, to all intents and purposes, the only admissible point of view. To the Jewish eye God first directly revealed the ray of His light; it remained for the heart of mankind to feel its warmth. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their

inward parts, and in their heart will I write it." For the sealing of this covenant One was needed in Whom the promise should cease to be an anticipated ideal and should become a realized fact.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADVENT OF THE SAVIOUR

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."—LUKE xviii. 27.

THE four centuries and a half intervening between the last of the prophets and the advent of our Lord were mainly marked by most momentous changes in the religious and social condition of the Jewish people. In one word, the religion of Israel disappeared and Judaism stepped into its place; Israel of the twelve tribes was forgotten, Judah remained alone. Speaking generally, it may be said that these profound alterations accompanied three great events in Jewish history, and were partly precipitated from them. First, the Captivity of the Ten Tribes who came to be absorbed among the "heathen"; the captivity of Judah, whose two generations of intimate contact with the conquerors served to transform many ancient customs and to originate some new ones. Second, the Return, first under Zerubbabel, then under Ezra and Nehemiah, when religious and social tendencies previously unknown or only incipient received that definite shape destined never to depart completely. Third, the "Hellenizing" of the civilized world by Alexander the Great and his successors—especially of Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes. To each of these fateful occurrences we must turn for a moment, in order to trace their chief consequences. A satisfactory conception of the political and

social surroundings amid which Christ appeared depends upon some knowledge of the preceding years.

(1) The effects of the Exile may be treated with comparative brevity. For while it is obvious that proximity to the heathen peoples, familiarity with their customs, and a general learing of their beliefs cannot have remained without mark upon Jewish life and character, the knowledge necessary for a final determination of the resultant changes is not yet altogether in our possession. We are just beginning to command the sources of requisite information, and our mastery over the details which must have marked the connection between conquerors and conquered still stands incomplete. It lacks intimacy and vitality. But apart altogether from problems relating to the passage of heathen doctrines and usages into distinctively Jewish civilization—which must be dismissed here—it is not hard to picture the more prominent features, to draw conclusions regarding the tendencies that must have emerged in the nature of the case.

Israel as a nation conceived itself to be consecrated by Jehovah. His worship and ordinances were its care and its prerogative. The Jews had developed clear consciousness of this ere the great disasters of their middle period overtook them. They knew that their all consisted in Jehovah's favor, that their history was nothing less than the record of His divine manifestation, that in Him centred their hopes for a better and glorious future. Their most distinctive trait lay in their intense conviction that they were a people set apart. This belief cannot but have wrought upon them in many new ways when they suddenly found themselves cut off from the old opportunities for legitimate worship, and per-

force brought into closest contact with religious observances which the stricter among them at least must have abominated with their whole souls. As they came to feel the full pressure of the unwonted situation, two problems definitely presented themselves, and means for their solution had to be devised. Of these, the first was the preservation in complete purity of the traditional worship which had been concentrated upon and duly provided for by the temple at Jerusalem. The other was how to stave off the contamination which intercourse with the heathen was inevitably calculated to produce. To the former an answer would be comparatively simple were a class of men forthcoming who could be trusted as "specialists," so to speak, in the faith and rites once delivered to the saints. The only possible solution for the latter lay in the strong development and strict observance of customs whereby the Jews would be marked off from their Gentile neighbors; from common allegiance to which they would derive mutual support; by knowledge of which they would order their lives after a fashion conspicuously their own. In brief, the new circumstances put a premium upon the growth of specialized tradition and of distinctive custom. This crystallization in process of time came to sharpen that sense of isolation and of possession of a peculiar mission which already existed in something more than germ prior to the deportation. Any careful reader of the Prophets can learn for himself what all this implies by considering chapters forty to forty-eight of Ezekiel, and noting how they contrast with earlier prophetic utterances. The interesting feature is that external accessories of religion are here beginning to assume the importance previously associated with internal disposition of

heart. When we attempt, then, to represent to ourselves the general alteration produced by the exile in the religious and social condition of the Jews who remained Jews—and many of them lasped into heathenism—we may put the case somewhat as follows. The kingdom had passed away practically forever; Palestine and its people had ceased to be a political organization—one marked, of course, by a specialized religion—autonomous civil government was no longer to be included among their prerogatives. In place of this, they were on the way to become something totally different. Theocracy formed their future destination—that is to say, what once was a nation, civilly considered, had just begun to transform itself by slow gradations into a purely religious structure. It was not welded any more by dynastic considerations, but by worship, by adoption of strange practices which, in turn, stood most intimately related to religious beliefs and sanctions. Power came to pass from kings to priests and to those associated with them in their sacred duties. Interest in civil constitution, and in a localized territory, now concentrated itself upon sacrifice, upon the due service of Jehovah, above all upon Jerusalem as the sole place where the appropriate rites could be celebrated. The people were to be governed so that life might prove a means of grace; understanding of the duties prescribed to this end became a prerequisite to proper service of God; a special class conceived itself, or was believed, to be the depository of this knowledge. Hence the system was destined to develop into a rule of priests, or other accredited representatives of Jehovah's behests. This is the gist of the situation as far as one can gather from the institutions expounded by Ezra and Nehemiah, and solemnly taken over

by the body of the people shortly after the final Return. Such were the causes that must have led to the growth of this fresh tendency so far as it is now possible to infer.

(2) Just as during the period of the Exile these tendencies were incubating and perhaps tentatively asserting themselves, so, after the Return, they came to be fully developed, and their collective results provided the foundation for a great system which ultimately pervaded and regulated every detail of life. These alterations, as was inevitable, also give rise to numerous and conspicuous social changes. The overt beginnings of these movements are traceable in the events which happened after the Jews of the Return fairly settled themselves for good in the old country. The first labor of the community was the rebuilding of the temple. After many vicissitudes this task was brought to a close in 516 B.C. Of the changeful chances special to such a time the most important and far-reaching in its consequences was Zerubbabel's refusal of permission to the remnant of the ten tribes to participate in the hallowed work. This repulse originated the antagonism between Jews and Samaritans so prevalent in our Lord's time. The Samaritans, as they came to be termed, were also worshippers of Jehovah; but not having passed through the trials of exile, the tendencies toward elaboration of religious custom did not effect them. They clung to the simpler and easier worship of preexilian times. As a consequence, they furnished a convenient harbor of refuge for such of the immigrant Jews as did not approve the newer Law, with its many absorbing duties and its continuous, nay sometimes cruel, interference with common life. In other words, their presence reacted upon the stricter community at Jerusalem by

enabling it to purge itself unwittingly from elements of discord, and so to isolate itself more effectively from the surrounding "heathen."

Those who had returned with Zerubbabel remained a feeble and disheartened folk for two generations. The realities of the situation fell lamentably short of their high expectations. The great future designed for Jehovah's people seemed further off than ever, and many of His worshippers, their ideal thus dimmed, intermarried with the heathen who had entered upon the land during the Exile ; this was but an outward evidence of serious internal lapses. So far had the evil spread that the very priests were contaminated. Indeed, the danger of absorption amid the "strange nations" actually threatened. Accordingly, clamant necessity arose for the Jews to purge themselves. The opportunity for this fresh development presented itself in the year 458 B.C., when, by permission of Artaxerxes, Ezra traveled to Palestine, accompanied by reinforcements, so to speak. Thirteen years later Nehemiah undertook a similar journey armed with Artaxerxes' leave to put the shattered defences of Jerusalem in proper repair. These two men—Ezra, the scribe, the "expert" in matters of religion, and Nehemiah, the leader clothed in the authority of the "Great King"—were destined to be the re-creators of the Jewish faith. Under them what is known as Legalism was finally drafted and erected into a working system that became the mainstay of Jewish theocracy. The need for purification, with isolation as corollary, propelled their efforts. "Now while Ezra prayed, and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there was gathered together unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children : for the people

wept very sore. And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have married strange women of the peoples of the land: yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for the matter belongeth unto thee: . . . be of good courage, and do it." After the people had thus purged themselves, it was possible to proceed with the enactment of the whole Law. The account given in Nehemiah is picturesque and effective: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate. . . . And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding; . . . and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law; . . . and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground; . . . and the Levites caused the people to understand the law. . . . And they read in the book of the law of God distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading. . . . Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers." A new covenant was thus made with Jehovah. "Behold, we are thy servants this day, and as for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof,

behold, we are thy servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have power over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And yet for all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, our Levites, and our priests, seal unto it. . . . Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed wards for the priests and for the Levites, every one in his work; and for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits."

The main difference between the older religion of Israel and the Judaism founded in the manner just related, centres in the fact that the latter reposed more upon *written ordinances*. This constituted the point of departure for a complete separation between the masses and the class "learned in the Law," who alone were equipped to furnish the instruction indispensable to legal purity. For many years after Ezra and Nehemiah their work remained in process of slow consolidation; opposition to their tendencies and behests gradually disappeared, with the result that a regular hierarchy, composed of priests and men learned in the Law, ruled the Jewish people, whose single right became more and more that of obedience; the hierarchy consequently grew to be a realized fact. Necessarily, too, the constituent members of this strange state separated themselves with growing exclusiveness from other tribes, felt with clearer consciousness that they were set apart, prided themselves increasingly upon their peculiar privileges, and so came to be less and less inclined to brook any interference with them. Under the instruction of the priests the Jew was now finally destined to "Remember the law of Moses, Jehovah's servant, commanded unto him

in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." In this theocratic organization the nation as a whole lost its ancient liberties; new burdens for the support of religious ordinances were thrust upon it, and an endless round of duties, many of them unknown hitherto, gradually crystallized themselves about almost every act of daily life. But just on account of this ever present sacrifice and perpetual service, men learned to value more and more highly the benefits they enjoyed at such great price. The Law shielded them against outer paganism and, for the good of mankind be it said, preserved intact the prophetic conception of a personal God whose holiness, justice, righteousness, and loving-kindness were finally to redeem the world. Needless to say, all this was the slow work, first of the Exile, then of the centuries which intervened between the Return and the absorption of Palestine into the empire of Alexander the Great.

(3) The story of post-exilian transformations, the tale of the relation between Greek civilization and the Jews, is a matter of generations. It began in 332 B. C. and ended, after a manner, in 63 B. C., when the Holy Land finally fell into the wide stream of Græco-Roman conquest and culture. For our present purpose events till the year 168 B. C. may be suppressed, with one significant exception. Of the monarchs between Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes many were swayed by the conception of international comity, a natural accompaniment of their sense for empire. Accordingly, the Jews

were as a rule regarded with favor, mainly because they stood potentates in good stead as a connecting link between various Eastern and semi-Occidental peoples. Jewish colonies became dispersed all over Syria, Asia Minor, and in Egypt they flourished especially. This was the origin of the *Diaspora* or Dispersion which, as we shall see, was destined to be so influential in the spread of nascent Christianity. But, setting aside this feature meanwhile, it may be said that, from the rise of Alexander the Great till the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, Judaism was still chiefly occupied with its own consolidation. The priesthood who serve Jehovah's altar, the scribes who give instruction in His law, continue to gain firmer and firmer footing, and the organized security of the religious system expresses itself in the heightened dignity attached to the office of high priest:—

How glorious was he when the people gathered round him
At his coming forth out of the sanctuary!
As the morning star in the midst of a cloud,
As the moon at the full;
As the sun shining forth upon the temple of the Most High,
And as the rainbow giving light in clouds of glory;
As the flower of roses in the days of new fruits,
As lilies at the water spring,
As the shoot of the frankincense tree in the time of summer;
As fire and incense in the censor,
As a vessel all of beaten gold
Adorned with all manner of precious stones;
As an olive tree budding forth fruits,
And as a cypress growing high among the clouds.
When he took up the robe of glory,
And put on the perfection of exaltation,
In the ascent of the holy altar
He made glorious the precinct of the sanctuary.

And when he received the portions out of the priests' hands,
Himself also standing by the hearth of the altar,
His brethren as a garland round about him,
He was as a young cedar in Libanus;
And as stems of palm trees compassed they him round about,
And all the sons of Aaron in their glory,
And the Lord's offering in their hands,
Before all the congregation of Israel.
And finishing the service at the altars,
That he might adorn the offering of the Most High, the Almighty,
He stretched out his hand to the cup,
And poured of the blood of the grape;
He poured out at the foot of the altar
A sweet-smelling savor unto the Most High, the King of all.[1]

As a rule, the sway of the foreign despots was mild as despotism then went; from time to time the peculiar privileges of the Jews were confirmed, and the theocracy attained some considerable civil as well as strictly ecclesiastical authority. The hammering destined still more completely to isolate the judaized Jews from the rest of the world was a thing of the future. The coming trials indeed were to form a necessary discipline. For just as, but for Ezra, the remnant that returned might have lapsed into heathenism, so but for the high-handed intervention of Antiochus Epiphanes in religious affairs, the international character of Eastern civilization after the death of Alexander the Great might have seriously endangered Jewish particularism; the God-idea might have been exposed to contamination. But in the year 168 B. C. Antiochus Epiphanes took Jerusalem, and proceeded to abolish all distinctively Jewish customs. He

[1] Ecclesiasticus, LV. 5-15.

caused sacrifice to be offered to Jupiter upon the great altar dedicated to Jehovah—this was the "abomination of desolation" of the Jews; he forbade the practice of any Jewish rites, and prohibited all peculiarly Jewish customs, such as circumcision and the keeping of the sabbath. By his orders every roll of the Law that could be secured was destroyed. His plain purpose was to transform the Jews into pagans by main force of administrative command.

This was more than the people could endure, and rebellion broke out under the leadership of the Hasmonæans, whose most famous scion was Judas Maccabeus. In three years to a day the struggle had been brought to successful issue, and the outraged temple was once more solemnly dedicated to Jehovah. Our present interest, however, lies not so much in these stirring events as in their results. Persecution roused opposition, success bred fanaticism; then, as always, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. As a consequence, Church and State were to be practically one for a hundred and thirty-one years under the various members of the Hasmonæan dynasty. As the decades rolled by, the aristocratic class tended to become more and more influenced by foreign civilization, particularly by Greek culture, while the Church gained power by imbuing the common people with the "idea of God and the Law" through the influence of those popular teachers so well known to us under the name Pharisees. To put the situation in a word, vicissitudes once more came to the rescue, and Judaism flourished amain amid misfortunes and threatenings of heathen domination.

These being the collateral causes, what now of the conquerors in the struggle with Antiochus

Epiphanes? What, in other words, were the religious, social, and ethical movements that led up to the condition of Palestine when Christ appeared? Several outstanding features completely foreign to the social conceptions which modern civilization has rendered quite familiar must be kept prominently in view. Notwithstanding the reign of Herod the Great, who was believed by his contemporaries—Gentile rather than Jewish—to be the first monarch in the Eastern world, it may be said that, during the period immediately connected with our Lord's life, the Jews were politically a subject race. Herod's friendship for the Roman masters was little distinguishable from sycophancy. And at the birth of Christ even the show of independence retained by him had finally passed away. This political subjection was not without important internal results. Undisturbed by questions of high policy, the Jewish ruling classes found themselves able to devote exclusive attention to ecclesiastical and social affairs. They had every opportunity to transform their people into a close religious corporation. Thanks to their intense and tragic attachment to Jehovah's worship, they perfected an ecclesiastical organization which still remains without precise parallel. The ideal of the Pharisees—to create a nation devoted solely to religious interests—thus met with circumstances peculiarly favorable to its realization; and in so far as any ideal can be completely realized, it may be admitted that this one was. Moreover, the comparatively small remnant of the orthodox Jews no longer inhabited an extended kingdom—one never bigger than Massachusetts even in David's time. The phrase, "from Dan to Beer-sheba," possessed no meaning now. Judea proper was the home land, and owing to its restricted limits,

oversight of the entire life of the inhabitants presented few difficulties, while the comparative proximity of all to Jerusalem kept the great religious festivals fresh, not merely as pious memories, but by the actual participation of many. The synagogues freely scattered over the country furnished every opportunity for acquirement of direct knowledge concerning Jehovah's desires and commands. At this time, then, thanks to the causes already discussed, the descendants of the Jews who had wrung religious immunity from Antiochus Epiphanes were thoroughly homogeneous, completely cut off from other nations of the Roman Empire by their customs, while their limited numbers and narrow territory rendered the maintenance of a highly specialized ecclesiastico-social organization very simple as such things go. So far the body; the spirit next claims our attention.

During the lapse of four centuries and a half religion and society had come to be ruled by that highly elaborated system known as the Law. The numerous regulations, prescribed principally in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, formed the basis for the working code, and it must be remembered that these rules, sufficiently exhaustive and exhausting, were in full daily operation. Nor was this all. In the course of generations the written Law had been ever and increasingly expanded by the commentaries and interpretations added to the original documents by the scribe class—now known as the Pharisees. Taken as a whole, they embodied a continuous and amazingly painstaking effort to create a code which would provide direction for every situation in life—social, moral, religious. And as the occasions sprung upon man by life's chances are endless, so the prescribed directions tended to

become innumerable. So minute had they grown that a Jew found himself face to face with one or another literally at every turn. Worse than all, if he transgressed in one, he was held guilty of breaking the whole Law. In such circumstances, a sense of oppression and a fear of transgression could never be far from him. Yet knowing that by observance of all these precepts the favor of Jehovah was to be won, he could even rejoice in his bondage:

Oh how I love thy law!
It is my meditation all the day.
Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies;
For they are ever with me. . . .
I have refrained my feet from every evil way,
That I might observe thy word. . . .
How sweet are thy words unto my taste!
Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get understanding:
Therefore I hate every false way. . . .
Thy testimonies I have taken as an heritage for ever;
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Enthusiasm for a life right with God, perception of the plain path toward goodness, no matter in what unwonted dilemma, were thus guarded and nurtured, and it is unquestionable that, thanks to the Law thus elaborated, the moral condition of the Jews was immeasurably superior to that of the surrounding pagan peoples. Yet the consciousness of bondage, so keenly experienced and so strongly expressed by that Pharisee of the Pharisees, St. Paul, and a vague feeling as if of injustice, when every legitimate effort to abide in the right way failed to stave off transgression, could not but prevail with many. To this the Pharisees themselves testify: "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed." If,

then, in its preservation of the God-idea, in its inculcation of moral strenuousness, in its provision of a social horizon bounded only by religious and ethical interests, the Law proved its strength, it also engendered numerous defects which, in their immediate results, were rapidly tending to outweigh even such excellencies.

As we have already seen, the Jews looked down upon their pagan fellow-subjects in the Roman Empire, and upon their political masters. They were supremely conscious that to them the oracles of God had been committed. Religious pride of this sort was typified by the Pharisees in our Lord's time, as we are well aware from His words. It embodied an attitude justifiable on two grounds only. If the pride be not accompanied by a sense of one's own perfection, it may be so far legitimate. With the Pharisees any such reservation seems to have been but a remnant. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican," would appear to illustrate their usual attitude. Once more, this sense of superiority may be justified if it find supplement in a fiery zeal for missionary work. But with the Jews, the disposition to this was elementary or absent. Their unique hold upon their national history, and their perception of its implications blinded them to everything else. They possessed a mission which they regarded as their prerogative, and they evinced but slight anxiety that others should share its privileges with them. When they made converts, it was churlishly, and with many reservations directed toward safeguarding their special rights as God's children. Their general attitude towards men of alien faith was one of uncompromising opposition, of unconcealed horror, if not of positive hatred, as many

passages scattered impartially through canonical and apocryphal books show.

Shut up thus within themselves, the Jews gravitated more and more towards externalism in religion, and the Law was the great motive-force operating in this direction. The central and inward principle of righteousness tended to be increasingly obscured beneath the ever accumulating mass of petty precepts. Ceremony and rite, with their outer observances, came to stand in place of that inner purity so grandly preached by the prophets. Little wonder that the issue turned out a sorry thing enough. The resultant morality was ecclesiastical, not human, much less divine. Offerings in support of the temple service blotted out neglect of nearest and dearest. Attention to the punctilios of external custom served to make a man holy, were he never so unfaithful in the common relations of life; heartlessness and deceit were excused by rigid attention to the superficial details connected with the fossilized ritual of ecclesiastical service. Honesty, gentleness, industriousness, faithfulness in business availed nothing apart from professions of faith, the utterance of long prayers, and the practice of many ceremonies. Thus that inward moral tendency, that attitude of the soul toward God and the good, which operates as a principle hallowing all life, became lost; it formed no part of the inherited traditions. The mere mechanism of holiness, supplied from an external source, took the place of personal conviction, devotion, conscientiousness. The possibility of conversion—that change of heart which renders an entire character concentric to new purposes, and transforms the whole meaning of life, readjusting the works that ought to be done, and those that must be left undone—was stamped

out. The Jewish people were now treading the aimless round of a circle of complicated rules, the spirit of which is not to be traced in any of their constructive religious books. And yet, when the word "people" is used, certain reservations require to be made.

We know that the common people heard Christ gladly. This implies, first, that complete blindness to the principles of spiritual religion had not overtaken them; second, that they felt the oppressive burden beneath which they staggered; third, that there were others, not of the commonalty, who listened with no such joy. The first and second points may be admitted at once. It is contrary to every record of history, contrary to human nature, that in an entire nation, no matter how small, every individual should be moulded alike. Moreover, as the Law was no more than the shell that kept the precious kernel of the sense of a personal and ethical God intact, there must have been those who, guided by the higher moral ideas that lay latent among the Jews, were so far prepared to respond to truly spiritual instruction. On the second point, the general unrest that marked Jewish life at the time witnesses to a feeling, if not of dissatisfaction, then of incipient perception of the unstable equilibrium incident to the prevalent regime. Half-conscious, perhaps unconscious, this idea may have been; it harbored there, awaiting its prophet. As to the third point, the Gospels supply information enough and to spare. Those in authority, and especially those who, unlike the priests and Sadducees, had close relations with the whole body of the people—the Pharisees, namely—were so completely given over to idolization of the Law, and so eaten up with pride in their own self-righteousness, based on the assur-

ance of due attention to its precepts, that they were deaf to the entreaties even of a Christ. Hillel, who lived a generation before Jesus, was an exception, and we know that even he was too good for his contemporaries. He spoke too plainly: "Who seeks fame loses fame; who does not increase in learning decreases; who does not teach is worthy of death; who uses the crown of learning for his own ends perishes;" or, perhaps, like our Lord Himself, he spoke too subtly: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? and if I am for myself, what am I? and if not now, when?" But of all the symptoms—excepting now the omnipresent Law—which affected the people of the day, the most important was the Messianic expectation.

The Jews who, as has been remarked, possessed historical sense almost entirely lacking among the other nations of antiquity—the Augustan Romans conspicuous by exception—understood the pervading purpose of their national story, and expressed their knowledge most characteristically in the hope that, at some time, a deliverer would arise whose genius was destined to place them in the position to which their office as the chosen people entitled them. This expectation formed a peculiar feature of Israel for centuries, the prophets having begun to familiarize men with it so early as the eighth century before Christ. As was natural, it varied much in intensity during the long intervening stretches, now being dimmed or in abeyance, bursting forth anon with increased force or with richer coloring. One of these eras of renewed anticipation happened to be ushered in several generations before the birth of Christ, when John Hyrcanus (135–105 B. C.) occupied the office of high priest—years when the Jews were yet again beset by foreign foes.

The books of the Maccabees, the Blessing of Saul, the Psalter of Solomon, and others remain to bear witness to the presence and general character of this latest ebullition of hope: "Behold, O Lord, and raise up their king the son of David at the time that Thou hast appointed, to reign over Israel Thy servant; and gird him with strength to crush unjust rulers; to cleanse Jerusalem from the heathen that tread it under foot, to cast out sinners from Thy inheritance; to break the pride of sinners and all their strength as potters' vessels with a rod of iron; to destroy the lawless nations with the word of his mouth; to gather a holy nation and lead them in righteousness. . . . In his days there shall be no unrighteousness in their midst; for they are all holy and their king the anointed of the Lord. He shall not trust on horses and riders and bowmen, nor heap up gold and silver for war, nor put his confidence in a multitude for the day of war. 'The Lord is king,' that is his hope. . . . God hasten His mercy on Israel to deliver them from the uncleanness of profane foes. The Lord is our king for ever and ever." Subsequently this expectation was never far from the Jews, and so wrought upon them that it had become matter of common knowledge to the pagan world of imperial times. Suetonius, the Roman historian, is quite distinct on this point: "A firm persuasion had long prevailed throughout all the East that it was fated for the empire of the world, at that time, to devolve on some one who should go forth from Judea. This prediction referred to a Roman emperor, as the event showed; but the Jews, applying it to themselves, broke into rebellion, and having defeated and slain their governor, routed the lieutenant of Syria, a man of consular rank, who was advancing to his

assistance, and took an eagle, the standard of one of his legions.'' Law or no law, the people were longing for a personal leader who should show them the way of righteousness, render them wholly pleasing to Jehovah, and so set them upon a pinnacle as vicegerents of the earth, the universally accredited and authoritative representatives of the one true God.

The prevalence of this unrest and its attendant expectation at length found illustration, familiar to all, in the reception and teaching of John Baptist. The overlordship of the Romans, with its continual menace to Jewish customs and occasional interference; the growing misery of the population under taxation, especially during the reign of Herod the Great; the wars on the southeastern borders of the Roman Empire; above all, Herod's death, and the anticipated transition to a milder regime, had generated many fears that now gave place to many hopes which, like all reactions, ripened to extreme expression. Men were willing to welcome any one who promised even change, much more a prophet who openly preached deliverance. To this our Lord's own words testify: "Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, here; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. . . . Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." During this inflammable period, John Baptist, a unique figure, suddenly appeared in the wilderness of Judea. We are not now concerned so

much with the causes that may have coöperated in his favor as with the new and unprecedented nature of his message. The Messianic expectation, almost immemorial with the Jews, had been associated with an earthly king who, though he might suffer, would at the last vanquish, to the destruction of heathen supremacy and the liberation of the chosen people, who would thenceforward be free to elaborate and enforce the law of Jehovah. If not for every Jew, at least for nearly all Jews of influence, these semi-materialistic ideals reigned supreme. John Baptist first perceived their illusory character; he was pioneer too among those who had the courage to lay their convictions bare, to promulgate them as a novel and better gospel. He desired to shatter the time-honored superstition that the chosen nation must await with folded hands till the true deliverer declare himself and prove his right by might. He wished to substitute for the more ancient faith a moral conception—each man must now take it upon himself to be a co-worker with God, and in confidence, if with fear and trembling, proceed to work out his own salvation along with that of his people. In short, he lighted upon the startling discovery that the Messianic hope, though a promise to a nation, could be brought to fulfilment only by the energy of individuals. Moreover, he insisted that this power must find its central source, not so much in deeds of derring-do, as in a converted personality, one ready, just because of its changed disposition, to energize invariably and on all occasions in the direction of righteousness. Truly, among men born of women, there is not a greater than John Baptist, because he revealed a fresh fountain of hope, and a legitimate reason for expectation, by substituting a living future for a

dead past. It was no longer by what they had done, but by what they were to fit themselves to do in newness of spirit that the Jews could discover their justification. John adjured them to set aside their present habit of life under the Law, not because this was necessarily bad, but because it tempted many to believe that counsels of perfection already held sway, and so prevented them from seeing that the whole soul stood in need of sweeping and garnishing. Hence his message came to be marked by combination of the most paradoxical qualities. Unprecedented, it was identical in a measure with that of the great prophets; harsh, it was nevertheless marvellously attractive; spiritual, it yet presented materialistic accompaniments such as Jesus afterward felt Himself bound to condemn.

Like the Rabbis, John spoke with authority; like the Sadducees, he came of a priestly race; like the Essenes, he mortified the flesh; like the Zealots, he believed in deeds rather than in words. So, when he attracted multitudes who, knowing not why, yearned for a deliverer, he seemed to possess affinities for all the chief sects of the day who, with greater or less clearness, understood what they most dearly desired. But simply on account of this commingling of elements, the result was a new thing. Repentance —an inward change—formed the burden of his gospel, and he flared it forth in no uncertain terms: "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The children of Abraham had not died out of the land, nor was their extirpation likely. For by baptism, "a symbol which stood for the expulsion of sin by

repentance," a bond might be formed between all who were ready for Jehovah's sudden appearance in His temple after that the messenger had prepared a way before Him. John's mission was to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and to found a community so cleansed in heart as to be ready to seize the changed conditions destined to arise immediately. Yet to this inner alteration he considered external rite indispensable. Jew-like he expected that the ordinance of baptism would, in its own right, so to say, be productive of potent effect. And naturally his disciples, less free from legal associations than their master, superadded other practices. So "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." John knew himself for a forerunner only, and his way had the imperfections incident to preparation. Nevertheless, he was *the* forerunner, and he stands sanctified for every Christian, because from his baptismal consecration, whether a work of supererogation or no, Christ's missionary career dates. John was not worthy to untie Jesus shoe's latchet, yet by this very sense of unworthiness, he stands transfigured ineffably forever.

"John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified of all her children." Little as the official representatives of Judaism appreciated John Baptist, their failure to fathom Jesus was still more complete. For if John's work were spiritual and contemplated an internal reformation that spelled foolishness to formalists, this repentance, with its washings and fastings, was but the foreshadowing of Jesus' infinitely deeper spirituality. With His Advent John dis-

appeared, not simply murdered by the Tetrarch, but at once transcended and justified by the Christ. The incomparable pathos of the picture —the unique central figure, the turbulent surroundings, human effeteness and ineffectuality, the gift of eternal life and its nigh unanimous rejection—ever presents fresh features to every observer in each succeeding age. Here we can but ask, and attempt brief reply to, the question, What did it all mean?

Ancient religion, as we shall see more fully, had exhausted every device to convince man of the worth of life and the nearness of God. Pantheism had located deity in everything only to discover that everywhere distinct manifestation failed; Nature worship, with its lords many and gods many, had worked towards the conception of one deity through long fits of slow dissatisfaction, only to find the shrine inhabited by a dread fate having neither heart nor discrimination; the cultus of Jehovah, the God of the whole earth and the righteous Judge of man, had become obscured amid the multiplying demands of the Law till at length some suspected Him of being little better than a taskmaster who of set malice prescribed impossible labors. The times were ripe for a more specific revelation of the Divine Nature, for, as never before, enfeebled, disenchanted, but still eager for the one thing needful, the world halted as if in expectancy. Nevertheless, wholly rapt up in their variegated materialism—social, non-moral, yet at the same time religious—the vast majority failed at first to appreciate the Advent of the Saviour. Worse had still to befall both Jew and Gentile before this consummation. "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their

face he was despised, and we esteemed him not." The immortal pathos of it all lay in Jesus' self-knowledge of what He was and of what it was His to accomplish. He yearned toward mankind, lifted humanity inconceivably—almost to the plane of deity; and yet His own—those to whom He came and for whom this elevation was His free gift—knew Him not. Accordingly, the meaning we seek must be gathered, not from man's judgment, not even from that of the disciples, but from Jesus' own thought and from His own testimony to the work that was given Him to do.

The record of the gospels is here perfectly conclusive. Jesus' thought of Himself displays a profound conviction of intimate communion with God, a surpassing insight into the real nature of man, an unexampled knowledge of the ultimate relation between Deity and Humanity. More striking, if possible, than all these was His decisive judgment that with Him past and present end, and that from His Person the future takes its departure. His was a special revelation, destined to turn the universe from its idols, consecrated though they might be by long ages of usage, to a fresh and incomparably deeper appreciation of the entire situation involved in the very fact of human life. He recognized this, and was perfectly aware that He and He alone could be the instrument of the gigantic transformation. Further, He proved Himself to the full—proved Himself mayhap more than we can even now understand, in that He *did* "destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days" built "another made without hands." These three days, triumphant in shame, formed fit epitome of the three years in which, face to face with universal scorn or hatred, He turned

opposition, obloquy, and death itself into an ascending series of opportunities for revelation of the Divine Nature in human form. All ancient conceptions of right and wrong betook themselves to flight, all old standards of judgment went by the board. Man's passions forsook their office as the designated ministers of damnation; sacrifices and oblations sank to the level of their attenuated reality; the voice of the great prophets ceased to be a mere minatory command; the popular Messiah, as a more successful and infinitely less barbarous David, took his place among other discredited and often discreditable superstitions. The world-king of the Jews was served with a writ of perpetual banishment; the Temple service and the Law shrank to their proper proportions as means in the mysterious providence of God. "My kingdom is not of this world." Yea, verily. In place of all these, what was there now? Jesus Himself, His revelation, His person. His revelation showed forth the true kingdom of God; His person timelessly solved the timeless problem of salvation. In His revelation He proved His divine sonship; in His person He could not but be the Saviour, as indeed subsequent history attests the world over.

Christ's revelation finally sets forth that God, to be God, must realize His fatherhood; that man, to be man, must recognize his veritable sonship. His intense appreciation of the spirituality of the Divine Nature throws a beam of heavenly light into the depths of the human heart and reveals there, so long and so sadly concealed, a similar spirituality. Touched in all points like as we are, He knew our weaknesses, our limitations as compared with God's fulness, yet, for this very reason, He also experienced our possibilities, and had appeared in order to reveal the

means to their highest realization. A man, He confessed His sonship, and so became to all men who choose to hear the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Yet, once more, this revelation could not have been accomplished apart from His divine nature in what it was, nay, in what it still is and ever must be, as an unfailing source of continually renewed moral and spiritual aspiration. With literal truth St. Paul said, "To me to live is Christ." By virtue of His person, Christ is thus the Saviour. Through Him, as through none other, the gateway to consecrated manhood has been opened wide as wide can be. Such are His marvellous winsomeness, His subtle grace, His perfect humanity of life, that in His own age, aye, and in every succeeding day, the principal elements in the spirit of the time have bowed themselves before His persuasive authority. Wherever His name has penetrated it has become, often with miraculous celerity, the dominant influence, none the less dominant that many have remained unconscious of the fact. Turning men everywhere from lust and sin and vain self-reliance, He has redeemed them by gently leading them to walk in the purer, saner, godlier ways. And only in so far as He has effected this in them have those who call upon His name *permitted* Him to rule them as their Master. Nay, He is ready and able to redeem the world now—to disperse that cursed brood of evils which so press upon modern civilization—if all who confess Him will but allow Him to transform their lives in very truth to the image of His. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." The groundwork of hu-

man nature, that below which we cannot penetrate when we analyze its higher side, is the fact that for sin we must even now "*suffer* with Christ whether we *believe* in Him or not." If men would but permit His spirit so to operate in their lives as to change them entirely to His likeness, the face of our vaunted civilization would become civilized indeed; it can be brought to some foretaste of perfection; it can be purged of its doubts and damnable evils only by that faith in the ideals revealed by Him, which leads a man to the conviction that every act not inspired by them is born of sin. It is this impression of inexhaustible power for the right, issuing from Christ's Person and flowing on uninterrupted in the characters of those saints who can fitly name themselves by His sacred name, that constitutes Him the Saviour, not in the narrow Judea of years long gone by, but in the whole of God's universe to eternity. And by this kind of faith lives that part of humanity which alone has, or is rising to, worthiness.

The Advent of the Saviour being the mightiest of historical occurrences needed a spirit of deepest religious perception to appreciate it duly and to sum it up. And, as always, the master of those who know was not wanting. For when every argument has been adduced, when every elucidation has slowly arrived at clearest statement, nothing really remains to be added to, as nothing can be subtracted from, St. Paul's ringing declaration: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For *therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith:* as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from

heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because *that which may be known of God is manifest in them;* for God manifested it unto them. For *the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity*."

CHAPTER VII

THE PREPARATION OF THE WORLD

"These things were not done in a corner."—ACTS xxvi. 26.

"Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. . . . And all went to enrol themselves. . . . And Joseph also went up . . . to enrol himself with Mary. . . . And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son." Whether St. Luke's memory served him rightly or no with regard to the census of Quirinius is matter of small importance for our present discussion. The essential point to be noted is the absorption of the Holy Land in the "world wide" Roman Empire. Taken in connection with universal history, it may be said that the gradual extension of Roman dominion, and the effects produced by it, constituted the preparation of the world for the religion of the Christ. Like other epoch-making organizations, the Latin overlordship was the magnificent consequence of long centuries of travail marked by ruthless bloodshed and the perpetration of numerous injustices. But as this slow sequence moved toward its wonderful close, events followed one another with growing rapidity, and in the space of a single century the civilized world changed its aspect, the alteration becoming increasingly conspicuous during the

last fifty years. The two immortal names round whom this period gravitates are Caius Julius Cæsar (100-44 B.C.) and Augustus Cæsar (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). The one, a military genius of the first rank, made the Empire what it was afterward to remain as a territorial unit; the other, an administrative genius seldom equalled, never surpassed, gave its final form to the body politic.

When we compare the Roman Empire as Julius Cæsar practically left it with the three "heavy weight" powers of the present day, it supports the contrast but ill. Britain, Russia, and the United States present surpassing external features. The Queen-Empress exercises sway over a dominion at least thrice as populous as that ruled by Hadrian, under whom the Empire attained its widest extension. The provinces of Rome could be laid upon those of the Czar, and yet the Colossus of the North would stretch beyond on every side. The United States contain a larger territory constituting a far more homogeneous geographical and, after a fashion, racial unity. Nevertheless, we have to remember that all such comparisons serve only to mislead. The great countries of the present are marked by traits peculiar to themselves; each possesses something distinctively its own which it contributes to the common stock of civilization. Further, of their many millions a considerable proportion can hardly be accounted as of prime importance for the advance of human well-being; at least so it would seem to contemporary judgment—a judgment which, simply because it is contemporary, may be partial or lack finality. With Rome the case was entirely different. To all intents and purposes her domain coincided with the civilized world of the era; as a matter of fact, the future progress of the human race—take any line you

choose, political, social, religious, scientific—lay in the hands of the peoples whom she ruled. All that was of worth and significance, like all that was destined to be of moment at a later date, had been gathered within her borders. As can probably never happen again, a single dominion could legitimately be identified with the world. This being the historical situation, what were its consequences?

Augustus was not merely the first emperor, but the first Roman to realize the significance of an imperial policy. Hitherto the provinces had been subjected to much harsh and impolitic treatment. In particular, they had been freely bled by taxation, and the proconsuls sent to administer law and government had too often viewed their position, not as a great trust, but as a grand opportunity for self-enrichment at the expense of the unfortunate populace. In these circumstances discontent inevitably waxed, while the sense of unity with Rome failed to grow strong. Their very sufferings and wrongs served to weld the subject nationalities into distinct fragments within the Empire, and to preserve that feeling of their own peculiar oneness which had sprung up round their special beliefs, customs, and political systems in the days of their independence. Augustus quickly perceived this and made haste to introduce reforms. He inaugurated a more liberal, more rational, infinitely more statesmanlike policy, and although numerous abuses were still rife, immense improvements, tending towards alleviation of fiscal burdens, unquestionably took place. In a word, the provincial governors found, as they never could under the Republic, that the irresistible will of the Cæsar formed both a fixed limit to their caprices and a tribunal before which they would be compelled to give an

account of their stewardship. Many of the events that occurred under Pilate's rule in Judea during the life of our Lord, for example, may be traced directly to this cause. Very possibly it had not a little influence over the decision that condemned Christ to a felon's shameful and barbarously cruel death.

But supplementary to all this, another line of policy, initiated in the wisdom of Augustus, gradually came to make itself felt. The success of the Roman provincial administration has become proverbial mainly for the manner in which it handled the ticklish problem of subject nationalities. Very few attempts to stamp out localized customs by force, especially those connected with the religious usages of the various peoples, stand recorded. The effort was to introduce Roman rule with as little disturbance as possible. This policy, however, served as a cloak for another aim sedulously pursued. By extending the privileges of Roman citizenship the emperors hoped to subdue manifestations of distinctively national feeling. They consciously tried to replace the ancient national pride by incorporating the conquered peoples into the grander unity of the new empire. And in this, Judea and Egypt aside, they met with wonderful success. The very magnitude of the Empire, the grand sweep of its territory, the splendor of Rome's past achievements, acted as a powerful leverage. In an author so distinctively Greek as Plutarch—the contemporary of nearly all the New Testament writers—we find numerous and significant traces of the profound impression produced by the accomplished facts of the day. The "Roman peace" too, as it was called, operated in the same direction. Deliverance from continual war, extinction of the very opportunities for mutual

quarrelling, emancipation from the strife between internal factions, and the consequent feeling of immunity from invasion and from the terrors of personal spite often incident to civil struggles with their cruel proscriptions, induced thousands to acquiesce in the domination of a single all-powerful will which, in its own interest, put an end to tumults. Thus, despite the conjunction of the most varied, even antagonistic, elements, the world was rapidly becoming one in a way that it had never been before.

What is termed the spread of "universalism," then, constituted the first main office performed by the Roman Empire in the Preparation for Christianity. Without this vast, and so far homogeneous, unity prepared for its reception under the striking providence of God, Christianity might very well never have been heard of beyond the narrow limits of the land of its birth, where sea, desert, and mountain keep such good guard. The uniformity of the Empire, or rather the main qualities characteristic of it, thus require to be clearly understood. These qualities are divisible fairly enough into two groups—one external, or of the *body* politic; the other internal, or pertaining to the general *spirit* of the civilization of the period. The fuller discussion of the spirit that permeated the entire organization we reserve till later.

First, then, and in modern phraseology, the Roman Empire was at once a continental and a maritime power—continental as respected all lands over which assured sway reigned, maritime in relation to the Mediterranean Sea. An effective instrument for levelling those barriers of custom and sentiment—far more subtle and difficult to alter than mere territorial arrangements—which nations have from time immemorial set up

between one another, is to provide plentiful means of interçourse. This can be successfully accomplished only when universal peace reigns, and prospect of its immediate disturbance lies remote. As we have seen, Rome had secured these conditions throughout the greater part of her dominions. It may strike us as strange, nevertheless it is true, that, from the close of the Roman imperial period till the middle of the second quarter of the present century travel, with its accompaniment of foreign intercourse, were comparatively difficult. In other words, during the intervening ages man never enjoyed facilities comparable with those afforded then and now. To find something like the contemporary movement of men we must go back these nineteen hundred years. Unlike as they may be in other respects, the two periods present some similarity in all that pertains to the essential conditions of travel. Security and excellent means of communication mark both. The Roman peace gave the one, the Roman roads supplied the other. Incredible as it may seem, this does not exhaust the tale. Till the invention of the locomotive and the marine engine, travel was never so rapid over long distances as it had been under the Cæsars. We hear of a high Roman official who was able to pass from Southern Spain to Rome in a week; and, speaking more generally, we know that the feats accomplished by what might be termed the imperial post were little short of marvellous. The great arteries of communication were constructed and guarded by an irresistible power. All could pass along them in safety, and, even taking our own time as a standard, with comparative speed. Intercourse was no longer barred, had actually become simple, comparitively speaking; and we may

rest assured that, under such conditions, travel was by no means so unusual as some might naturally suppose. Further, as respects man's other chief highway, the sea, the Roman emperors, if they could not control the elements, could at least stamp out some attendant dangers. For years the waterway between East and West had been infested by pirates, who fell upon the rich cargoes of Syria, Arabia, and Egypt, rendering trade at once insecure, dangerous, and unprofitable. But the single will of the emperor, being backed by the requisite force, drove them from their chosen hunting ground, and, as if by magic, the Mediterranean became as safe as the Atlantic is to-day. So East and West were free to commingle with one another, to gain that intimate knowledge which bartering is calculated to produce. What the imperial government thus accomplished both as a continental and a maritime power gave rise to an immense extension of travel and trade, which could now be undertaken in reasonable prospect of security and immunity from illegitimate exaction. The world was fairly on the way to become one in an entirely new sense. A path had been cut for cosmopolitanism, and the need for sending Roman soldiers and administrators to all parts of the imperial domain familiarized some with these new means of intercourse, convinced many of their availability, security, and speed. Provincials grew into the habit of making pilgrimages to the Empire-city; there they had opportunities for meeting with all sorts and conditions of men; Romans sent their sons to Greece for "finishing" education, and the "grand tour"—Greece, Egypt, Italy, and sometimes Gaul—was not at all uncommon. Circumstances conspired to break down that aloofness which so ordinarily and effectually separates

one nationality from another, and wide breaches in this exclusiveness had already been made by the entrance of Roman citizenship with its invigorating communication of definite legal privileges. So far, then, what may be termed the body.

When we turn to the more intimate bonds of the civilization of the day, similar phenomena at once reveal themselves. The most excellent means of communication, the most widely distributed habit of travel would be of little avail—as indeed contemporary events prove—were men unable to enter into familiar intercourse; and the sole medium for this is to be found in language. Here too the Roman Empire was well served. Take the imperial city for what she actually was, the centre of the vast dominion, and it may be said that to the east of her, one tongue, to the west of her another, was universally understood. As their civilization still shows, Spain and France, Italy and Britain, and, in a lesser degree, Germany traded, were ruled, and intensified their culture through the medium of Latin. Asia Minor, Asia Anterior, Hellas, Syria, Phœnicia, Palestine, Egypt found in Greek a common speech. Here were means of unification more potent, more profound than many policies even of all-powerful rulers. Nor does the recital end here. Rome herself became bilingual. Her cultivated men, born to Latin speech, were forced to familiarize themselves with Greek, just as the Russian of similar position to-day must learn French or English, if he is not to be cut off from contemporary culture. This spread of Greek in Rome was necessarily followed by the extension of its use farther west. So universal did it become, at least in the metropolis, that we find a learned man like Plutarch, not only put to

no inconvenience outside his native Greece by his ignorance of Latin, but even feeling himself so much at home in Rome herself as to be under no compulsion to acquire her mother tongue. The Greeks were giving, not only laws, but also language to the conquerors.

The numerous causes and widespread circumstances just outlined combined to produce a single result. In certain broad aspects of it, if not in every detail, the civilization of the time tended to become less provincial and particularist, more international and more marked by a common underlying or pervading sentiment. Græco-Roman culture spread everywhere. The name is significant. The contact of Greek ideas with Roman character had gradually produced fresh traits neither exclusively Hellenic nor exclusively Roman, but characterized by qualities special to a new compound. It may be said that, at the time of our Lord's birth, this amalgamated civilization, touched here and there with ideas filtered in from the Orient, prevailed all over the provinces with a Mediterranean seaboard. More slowly in some lands than in others, but still surely everywhere, unity of spirit was making its presence felt, at least among those who had claim to culture or who actually wielded influence. A broadening of life was in process, for ways of estimating it peculiar to restricted localities or to specific nationalities were beginning to be obliterated. Similar ideals, identical standards of judgment were arising to organize the world, not merely into a political, but into a social unity. "God," as Origen strikingly put it, "was preparing the nations for His doctrine, and providing that all men should obey the one Roman emperor; lest, if there were a number of kings and nations strange to

each other, it might be more difficult for the Apostles to do what Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Go, teach all nations.' It is well known, however, that Jesus was born under the reign of Augustus, who had bound together in one empire the great multitude of the dispersed inhabitants of the world." The comparatively brief period that had elapsed between the founding of the Empire and the birth of Christianity might reasonably seem far too short for the accomplishment of results so profoundly influential and so widely diffused. But we have to call to mind that unification of culture originated in the extraordinary scheme of Alexander the Great, "to Hellenize the world." He did not live to see the fulfilment of his desires, but the impulse given by him to the propagation of Greek ideas never lost its force, and as the years rolled on, Greece became more and more "essentially the paid teacher of the Roman" world for good or for evil. The task of the early empire was thus to impart unity or universality—with consequent stability—to a composite civilization that had been in course of formation for more than three centuries. This was accomplished in the generation immediately preceding Christ, accomplished too with remarkable ease and success, the enormous difficulties duly considered. For the concentration of power in the hands of a single authority happened to be precisely *the* remedy for the distractions, strifes, and disturbances that had so conspicuously worried an entire world during the last days of the Roman republic. And that intuition for government, so characteristic of the Romans, seemed to find incarnation in the first imperial Cæsar. He destroyed nought, but rather bent his splendid genius toward systematically welding the huge accumulations of many

centuries into one harmonious organism. And the time was big with unification. The personal weight of one recognized head was sorely needed; the channels for his self-expression had already been created by the distinctive spirit of Roman patriotism; the necessary, social, religious, and intellectual capital had been contributed by Greece, and in some part, small meantime, by the oriental mind; the vigorous tribes of Gaul and Germany had transfused their life-giving blood into the veins of outworn society. The imperial ruler had but to arouse the amalgamated peoples to consciousness of their unity, and to some appreciation of the benefits conferred by the metropolitan city. Thus it came about that *the* universal religion was born into *the* universal kingdom. Different and contrasted in all other respects, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world were one in this single and outstanding characteristic.

The Roman Empire has been called a body without life. And were it part of our present purpose to trace the causes that led to its eventual decline and destruction, evidence and to spare could be adduced to justify this harsh judgment. Yet to prevent misunderstanding, it must be insisted that the criticism scarcely applies to the period now under review. There can be no doubt that a diffused feeling of hopefulness, of expectation, in some of its manifestations little distinguishable from enthusiasm, heralded and hymned the achievements of Augustus. The world was sick of war, and it received the priceless gift of peace; the sudden change from weak and decentralized policies to strong central government, sure of itself, revived the nations by furnishing them with many reasons for priding themselves upon the empire to which they belonged; dead

as the ancient oracles might be, the rites of the Julian family became an imperial gift, and their widespread observance stimulated religious belief in many directions and led strayed sheep to return in some wise to the fold. Moreover, these movements as a whole were protected, nurtured, and even impelled by the emperor who, as head of the state, felt their present import and sensed their future influence as no other could. Taking all the phenomena of the nascent empire into consideration, one may fairly say that the new body politic possessed a living spirit in so far as thousands experienced relief and were touched by the faith that, after a fashion, humanity was beginning life over again. Here, as always, literature gathers up the spirit of the age. And if we appeal to the representative poet of the day, what do we find? "It was Virgil's aim in the *Æneid* to show that this edifice of Roman Empire, of which the enterprise of Æneas was the foundation, on which the old kings of Alba and of Rome and the successive generations of great men under the Republic had successively labored, and on which Augustus placed the coping-stone, was no mere work of human hands, but had been designed and built up by divine purpose and guidance. The *Æneid* expresses the religious as it does the national sentiment of Rome. The two modes of sentiment were inseparable. The belief of the Romans in themselves was another form of their absolute faith in the invisible power which protected them. . . . The personal figure of the emperor is thus encompassed with the halo of military glory, of beneficent action on the world, of a divine sanction, and of an ultimate heritage of divine honors. The *Æneid* considered as a representative work of genius is thus seen to be the expression or embodiment of an

idea of powerful meaning for the age in which the poem was written." The prevalent spirit of imperial times may have drawn upon the rapidly shrinking resources of the past rather than upon the inexhaustible treasures contained in ideals yet to be realized, nevertheless *it was a spirit*. Doubtless, the very pride in this final accomplishment of all things—so it seemed to many—itself spelled bankruptcy, but at the moment it sufficed as a *unifying* principle. Grace it may have lacked; its graciousness came as refreshing dew to a world parched by rapine, cruelty, and exaction.

"A plurality of kingdoms would have been a hindrance to the free dissemination of the doctrine of Jesus throughout the whole world." The unity favorable to its most rapid and easy spread now stood forth; the preparation of the world was complete, and complete in a manner hitherto unexampled. Palestine was so small that its size was frequently matter of ridicule with the Romans, yet, thanks to the same Romans, "these things were not done in a corner." The mighty empires of more ancient date in the farther east had frequently been manufactured, as it were, by daring adventurers, or by fortunate, sometimes skilful, generals. When their talents descended, the dominion carved out by them remained for a season. But almost invariably it fell a prey to similar forces generated elsewhere whenever the original creator, and his successor, if he had one, passed away. The enduring states of former times, of Greece for example, were generally small; their strength lay in their particularism, with its attendant development of a closely knit and homogeneous organization. But they too had to bow themselves, being too weak to withstand the big battalions of larger communities, or torn by those internal feuds which are ever prone to arise out

of the contempt bred by too much familiarity—a hidden canker of tiny states. In like manner, the colossal dominion of Alexander the Great went to pieces immediately after his death, not, however, till his plan of spiritual conquest had been fairly launched to successful issues under circumstances whereof he never dreamed. But the unity built up by Rome stood firmly rooted in the historical growth of Roman character and in the unparalleled genius of this race for organization and government. Their magnificent system of law was well calculated to make a world one. Their conquests over nature, in the shape of roads, aqueducts, and splendid towns raised amid barbarous surroundings, and no less their victories over the human spirit in many nations—victories wrought by discipline, unflinching devotion to duty, and instant, thorough performance of the work that lay nearest to hand—had provided broad yet deep foundations for their final principate. To be a Greek or an Egyptian, a Jew or a Gaul, was as nothing, but to be a Roman citizen was to become a person of consideration—the declaration of citizenship acted like magic almost everywhere. "The chief captain was also afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him." Slowly, but all the more surely, this unique organization had raised itself upon the ruins of unnumbered kingdoms by force of its own intrinsic worth, and by this same merit it had now impressed itself upon the civilized world. As if by direct interposition of divine power, civil chaos had been transformed into cosmos by the provision of law and the maintenance of order. The unity of man seemed to be an accomplished fact. For the first time in history, humanity could call itself humanity with some show of reason. And as

nothing less than humanity was the object of the new religion, it found congenial soil among those in whom the Roman peace awakened some perception of the vast issues involved. It was thus no accident that St. Paul's words on Areopagus did not fall on deaf ears or strike upon amazed understandings: "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . And *he made of one* every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation." But for the Roman schooling, the Apostle might well have cast these pearls before swine.

This external unity, with its underlying causes, some of which still operate, was Rome's constructive contribution to the Preparation for Christianity. Here one can trace much that may justly be termed strong, permanent, and admirable. The picture presents another side, one that is too often permitted to obscure all that we have just been considering; and to this we must now turn.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PREPARATION OF THE SPIRIT

> "We have all sinned, some more gravely, others more lightly. . . . Not only have we erred, but to the end of time we shall continue to err."

THE Roman Empire under the Cæsars strictly so called (27 B.C.—96 A.D.) has long been a favorite field of controversy alike with the apologists and critics of Christianity. The former never weary of reminding us that social corruption then attained unprecedented proportions; the latter are as insistent that in the chief writers of the time —Tacitus, Seneca, Plutarch, and others— thoughts and aspirations may be found more exalted than any recorded in early Christian literature. Such divergences of opinion are well calculated to give one pause; some cause for them there must be, otherwise wilful exaggeration or blindness cannot but be charged upon both sides. A simple solution of the difficulty would be to say that the period is obscure. Unfortunately this refuge cannot be considered available. The records of the century are comparatively full, more ample indeed than those of several periods unanimously allowed to be tolerably well known. Further, we possess fair acquaintance with the elements constitutive of the prevalent social spirit —Greek culture, Roman character and institutions, the private life of the people, slavery, the pagan religions, Judaism, the causes and spread of luxury, the imperial systems of law and ad-

ministration, and so forth. Nay, information of a more or less precise kind fails us only in regard to the currents of oriental thought, more especially as they met and mingled at Alexandria, and, to a certain degree, at Rome herself; but even here, the last twenty-five years have largely increased our store. Accordingly, surprise at the continued advocacy of views so antagonistic deepens, and we are the more compelled to cast about for an explanation.

It is probably just to say that the difficulty of guaging this epoch may be traced to the obstacles which render it hard to adjust perspective properly. With Seneca, and especially Plutarch, in remembrance, one may easily err on the side of lenient judgment; with the eye on a page of Juvenal, or Tacitus, or Suetonius, one's indignation may get the better of one's calmness all too completely. And the dilemma is not simplified when we remember that the former confess what they think of life on the whole, the others state only what they deem wrong in some characteristics of certain lives. Yet the very extremes to which Tacitus and Juvenal commit themselves contain the key to the situation. The barriers that had hitherto pent up the motley qualities of varied peoples in different stages of civilization and spiritual culture had been gradually undermined, now they had fallen altogether. The consequence was a promiscuous junction of types, of traits, of associations the most diverse imaginable. And the immense difficulties incident to a judicial estimate of the period lie in the impossibility, shall we say, of adjudicating precisely upon the relative influence of any single factor or group of factors. While, then, we cannot propose to estimate these elements in the problem here, we may proceed to view the preparation of

the spirit aware at least of the perplexities involved; we may strive to hold an even balance.

The chief *external* accompaniment of the preparation of the spirit in the ancient world was the prevalence of frightful corruption and senseless luxury. Unsavory as these are, it would be blinking the truth to pass them over in silence. Society, at all events in the restricted sense of this term, was rapidly going from bad to worse. The Cæsars themselves embodied the decline. "Long before death ended the astute comedy in which Augustus had so gravely borne his part, he had experienced the Nemesis of Absolutism, and foreseen the awful possibilities which it involved. But neither he, nor any one else, could have divined that four such rulers as Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, and Nero—the first a sanguinary tyrant, the second a furious madman, the third an uxorious imbecile, the fourth a heartless buffoon—would in succession afflict and horrify the world. Yet these rulers sat upon the breast of Rome with the paralyzing spell of a nightmare."[1] Several elements combined to heighten the coloring of the terrible picture. The Empire itself had basis in force, in the right of the stronger, and the accompaniments of this made themselves felt in a widespread contempt for weakness, in utter lack of pity and compassionate helpfulness. Slavery had attained its greatest development, and with it the feeling of dependence, engendering a brood of foul qualities, flourished luxuriantly. Men, when deprived of rights, are apt to become devoid of righteousness, to serve a master, no matter how bad, rather than God; and the slaves, placed as they were in charge of children, did

[1] F. W. Farrar, *Early Years of Christianity*, pp. 10, 11 (Popular Edition).

not fail to impress their own sordidness, vileness, and sycophancy upon the rising generation. Family ties had been most seriously weakened; the appalling frequency of divorce—we find women counting the years by their successive husbands; the aversion to parental responsibilities caused by the encroaching demands of a luxurious life; the remnants of the *patria potestas*, or unchecked rule of the father over his own household, all conspired to bring this, the fundamental school of social culture and moral accountability, into disfavor. The emperors found it necessary to put a premium, not merely upon children, but upon the married state itself. The exposure of infants indicated an absence, not only of a sense of right, but even of common humanity. The debauchery of women, not excepting those in highest station and belonging to the most reputable families, furnished a lurid commentary on the extent to which the canker had spread; for here, as always, the corruption of the best is the worst. Other nameless vices met congenial soil. And, worse than all, public opinion was ready to tolerate anything. The irresponsibility, cruelty, and idleness of the masses were witnessed to by the unutterable horrors of the amphitheatre, in which they took almost delirious delight, in the clamor for distributions of wheat, in the crowds of beggars and would-be respectable parasites who fawned upon every rich man or shouted at the government for bigger shows and more frequent *largesses*. The records left by the chief writers—Juvenal, Tacitus, Suetonius, Persius, Martial—could not be further blackened even by partisan criticism; the contempt for human life which they everywhere attest can hardly be realized by the modern mind, so sentimental that it will discover arguments for the release of almost any

swinish scoundrel from his too merciful fate on the gallows. To be brief, immorality, sensuousness, grossness, gluttony, cruelty, bestiality, sordidness, sycophancy, untruthfulness were never so rife at one time; and, as if to render the situation even more gloomy, acts such as we should regard with utter revulsion, amounting even to physical sickness, were perpetrated, not in secret, but in the light of open day, and this without arousing anything in the nature of serious or unanimous protest. Moral sense had become completely blunted.

We have already noted that these are *external* signs which (such is the evidence) offer all too inviting material for exaggeration, or perhaps we had better say, for partiality. But the authors on whose testimony reliance must be placed were not without their own special limitations. The phenomena of the day happened to be so vast that no single mind could survey them all. Consequently, Juvenal and the rest report upon various details; they do not sum up the predominant spirit of the age. Moreover, as they themselves could not but be partakers in the prevalent civilization, it was impossible for them to see that the true cure for surrounding corruption was to be found, not in this or that reform planned upon a pattern derived from the good old times, but in complete renewal of the deep-seated forces that had everywhere brought to birth such prodigious declension. While it cannot be allowed that they deliberately falsify the facts, it is undoubted that they nowhere evince insight into origins, and are slow to perceive the relative proportion of things—they stood too near. In the nature of the case, it could not appear to them that the vices they deplored possessed significance, not as causes, but only as effects.

If, then, taking advantage of the perspective produced by the passage of time, we ask, What were the causes? we are at once in a position to see why it is so easy to exaggerate the crimes and immoralities of the period. Almost certainly these evils affected but a small number, relatively speaking, of the Cæsars' one hundred million subjects; otherwise, nothing short of a second flood had sufficed to cleanse the earth. Almost certainly they attained their most pernicious sway at Rome herself, and at the pleasure cities where her manners were aped. A common people like those who heard Him gladly still existed. But this is only another way of saying that the worst must be sought among those who had the best opportunities for living out classical civilization to the bitter end, who were so "in the swim" of its current as to be capable of glorying in its shame. Hopelessness, or a dumb acquiescence, marked the great body of the people far more than grovelling in filth or gourmandizing upon ridiculous dainties. And the essential point to be noted is that the unlimited revellings of the few, and the apathy or depression of the many, flowed from a common source. When we seek the ultimate cause, then, we are compelled to conclude that it must be elicited from the spirit formative of classical civilization as a whole.

Resuscitation of this spirit is of course impossible now; despite the mistaken efforts of some poets, we could not live it over again even if we would. "There is a gulf between the Greek mind and ours which it is impossible for us to recross. The difference in language is the least of the discrepancies between us. We regard some of the most momentous relations of life from a point of view quite opposed to that of the Greeks. Their manners, institutions, and historical tradi-

tions were different from ours. Physical science has disclosed laws and developed forces of which they were ignorant. Our religion has revealed an aspect of reality which they never contemplated. Our ethical philosophy rests upon another basis. Our aspirations point towards other aims. Our energies are spent in other channels; our whole civilization sets in other courses." But, notwithstanding this, we can describe the main features, and are able to trace the disastrous close to ineradicable tendencies inseparably bound up with them. The strength and weakness of classical civilization centred in the prevalent conception of citizenship. Only in the political association could a man find the opportunities necessary to self-development worthy of his nature. And so long as circumstances furnished the indispensable means, this restricted but social idea of humanity flourished and could be justified. Its vulnerable point lay in an incapacity to admit that a man might be of value simply because he was a human being. It never occurred to the citizen of the city-state that a career fit for a man could exist outside the *politeia*. Hence the germs of a tendency to despise mere manhood and to extol mere citizenship. Rights of man as man meant nothing, duties of citizens as citizens circumscribed the horizon. So long as the city-state, whether in Greece or under the Roman Republic —for Rome was as much a *politeia* as Athens or Sparta—supplied a civic career equal to absorbing the capacities of its best sons, all went well, so well that to this we chiefly owe the priceless benefits transmitted to us by that old Græco-Roman world. But when the Greek state fell, citizenship waned till it became a parody upon its former self, while the Greeks still remained men

prompted and torn by the aspirations peculiar to manhood.

In Rome the same story repeated itself, and with increased intensity; in imperial times it was dangerous even to attempt to fulfil the functions of a devoted citizen. Classical civilization in its prime had solved the problem of social life for freemen. But, on the other hand, the problem of personality had never strayed within its range, nay, there was no room for it—its bare import would have fallen upon deaf ears. Yet when the ancient solution passed away for ever this question still held its ground, clamoring, as it has done through all the ages, for some adequate reply. The conditions requisite for an answer were as yet unassembled. And not merely this. The associations of citizenship continued so to limit vision that the value of life, simply because it is human, could not be realized. Nevertheless—and here we light upon the paradox—for the vast majority life had ceased to possess any worth except as human, and so reckless disregard of it must be viewed as at once effect of bygone excellence and cause of present and future decline. Man had nothing left to him but life, and yet there was none so poor as to pay him homage for his simple humanity. The state, in the motley of imperial caprice, now reigned supreme; all citizens had disappeared except one. Despite this, their gaze attracted by the mighty past, men were unanimously, if unconsciously, leagued in a common pact to overlook their rights as men, and so to trifle with life, although they had been stripped of every other possession. The entire temper of the civilization lent its weight to this delusion—emphasized this world-embracing paradox. A citizen had ever been the chattel of his city; a child, of his father; a wife, of her husband; a

slave, of his master. Service to his peers in return for their ministry, contempt to his inferiors, constituted the citizen's dole. So, amid civic inanition man's proverbial inhumanity to man was provided with excellent forcing ground. To the disregard—nay, the strange unconsciousness —of the worth of personality, of man as a human being, we must trace the rapid social disintegration and the spreading anti-social spirit of imperial times. Humanity was sweeping and garnishing its soul after its own sufficiently perplexing manner.

If we inquire what resources this old conception of life possessed, we are enabled to penetrate still farther toward the seat of the dire disease. Græco-Roman paganism, as its name implies, drew upon the ancient Greek worship, most familiar to us in Homer, and upon Roman character, as expressed in Roman achievements under varied circumstances, rather than through a single literary medium. Virgil never became the bible of a race. In its prime, Greek paganism gave expression to that homelike feeling in the beautiful world and in social life which the inhabitants of Hellas first fully realized. The myth of Œdipus and the Sphinx throws a vivid light upon its origins. The Sphinx, a mysterious monster, half-brute, half-woman, sat at the top of a precipice and propounded the riddle: What is it that in the morning goes upon four legs, at noon upon two, and in the evening upon three? Many heroes before Agamemnon attempted reply and failed, only to be crushed by the monster and, thrown down the declivity, to perish miserably. But Œdipus, the fabled and unfortunate King of Thebes, made his way to the dread spot and, on hearing the problem, answered, Man; whereupon the Sphinx herself fell down the rocks and was

shattered. The myth implies that the Greeks were the first to perceive that the mystery of the universe culminates in man. And if Hellenic paganism be taken at its best, one is forced to admit the justice of this interpretation. Man, being the crown of creation, began to make gods in his own image. The qualities that marked off the Greek citizen from the half-human, and entirely inhumane, barbarian came to be idealized, and found body in the perfected forms of physical manhood which the Greeks so admired and cherished. While the civilization that nurtured this religion and worship lasted, things preserved their sweetness. But, as time passed and the savor began to escape, the gods, just because they stood so close to men, also showed signs of change. They took on less reputable qualities; it was not difficult to laugh off defects that were now revealing themselves by pointing to their like on Olympus. Craft was grafted upon wisdom, sensuality upon beauty, license upon power. And, long before the Roman period, the Greeks had discovered that their gods were not such estimable characters after all; the cultivated had shown that an adulterous Zeus, an abandoned Aphrodite, or a scolding Hera did not blazon forth ideals so worthily as past generations had believed. With this reflection present to many minds so early as Plato's time, it was inevitable that, in the lapse of several centuries, unbelief, culminating in open mockery, should overtake the whole pantheon. And when Greek culture came into efficient contact with Roman character, the old reverence had well-nigh departed; the ideals had ceased to enliven, and with them religious inspiration had taken flight. Oracles and mysteries, institutions that savored something too much of superstition, alone preserved semblance of authority.

Among the Romans a similar decline had been in process, but, thanks to the contrasted characteristics of the ancient Roman religion, it appeared in another guise. It may be affirmed that, as a general rule, the Greek and Roman minds were alike in their quickness to seize upon and to idealize outstanding social qualities. But here likeness ended. Roman genius developed a different fibre, and so the Latin people worshipped other gods, although they latterly adopted the Greek names, and took counsel with the Hellenic deities, so far Romanized. The ancient Roman religion, then, grew up, not so much round Roman qualities, as in connection with particular events pertaining to Roman social life. Hence the importance of "auspices"—a kind of divination—which had to be read ere any serious undertaking could be begun favorably. Deaths, births, anniversaries, especially those pertaining to the family and city, occupied an important place. The natural influences surrounding man's life were also matters of much moment. The gods of the city, of the fields, of the sea, of the woods, of thunder and lightning exercised wide influence in the religious economy. In a word, the old Roman cult was a worship of many protecting spirits, not of a number of personified beings, more or less akin to men, as with the Greeks. Or, if one likes so to put it, there was richer opportunity for the free play of superstition. Magic, divination, necromancy, prophecy, interpretation of dreams, the apparition of signs and wonders here found more congenial soil. Religion thus took on a body of life such as it never possessed with the Greeks—there was a priesthood, an order of men specially skilled in these affairs. Further, from the earliest historical times, the religion developed by accretion. That

is to say, Rome adopted as her own many of the deities special to conquered cities and tribes, beginning with the tutelary god of long forgotten Alba. At first, coming as they did from neighboring peoples, these were somewhat like the Roman gods proper—nature powers, guardians of social events, or abstractions,—that is, single qualities so far personified. Lacking the brilliant semi-oriental imagination, the worshippers of these gods did not surround them with a radiant or highly colored atmosphere. The deities tended to stand aloof from man, they possessed a distinctive nature of their own, and priests were necessary, not merely as experts in magic and so forth, but as intermediaries. Nevertheless, with the contact of Greek civilization the process of personification proceeded apace; the gods stepped down to their devotees as it were, familiarity increased, with the natural consequence of contempt, especially when reflective thought gained currency. Years prior to Augustus these influences had produced their destined effects. Roman toleration itself tended to breed indifference, the very crowd of deities—they might be counted by hundreds in the later pantheon—produced a confusion little favorable to the exaltation of any one who had already received the "honor" of admission. Amid material successes appreciation of the spiritual was rapidly losing vigor, and meaning had so far evaporated from the old religious observances that they had become largely mechanical. Greek scepticism completed the disintegration. Thus, on the whole, Græco-Roman paganism sufficed but little in the imperial period; the ancient oracles of both religions were either dead or in a state bordering on inanition. Driven by the pressure of events, man, the individual citizen whose vo-

cation had been filched from him, knew not where to look; when he did look, he cast a longing gaze backward, and so committed himself unwittingly, if not unwillingly, to a moribund past.

In addition to these resources in Græco-Roman paganism itself, human aspiration, thanks to the cosmopolitan spirit of the time, was enabled to draw also upon the religions of the farther East, especially of the great province Egypt, fertile in this as in other respects. What drafts were to be made upon them we shall see presently.

As has been indicated in the last chapter, Augustus assumed the imperial purple amid many manifestations of approval, if not of joy. Even before the defeat of Antony, his rule caused popular hopes to rise high. Sick of a hundred years' war and rapine, all longed for the deliverance which only peace could bring. Expectancy was the note of the age and, for a time, the Empire sufficed to stay material fears and religious doubts. At length, peace on earth and the negative goodwill to man implied in repression of disturbance appeared to have been realized, while the concentration of everything great upon a single personality—the ruler, dispenser of justice, and universal high priest—surrounded the Cæsar with a halo that ultimately led to his deification; he seemed no less than the incarnation of Providence. At the birth of Christ, and for half a generation thereafter, apocalyptic longings thus served themselves with a species of satisfaction. But the Cæsarean brood was soon to disturb this well-omened dream, and the yearnings of a universe were destined to burst out again the more strongly that they had been balked of fulfilment almost within reach. Shortly after the Christian communities had

grown up at Rome and other popular centres—between the reigns of Nero and Vespasian—dissatisfaction born of hope deferred was to attain its profoundest, most significant depth. To prepare the human spirit more effectually, the constructive tendencies of the first Cæsar had to pass away together with the swelling anticipations they had served to raise. The imperial god, who had bidden fair to become the centre of a life-giving cult, turned out so often to be a devil in human shape that many men at once descried his emptiness, and gave him over to the doubt or mockery already so plenteously bestowed upon the deities of the past. Citizenship shrunk to nothing, rights controlled by uncontrolled monsters, men were cast back upon their own resources, which now consisted of selfhood. Religion bereft of its ancient influence, faith dead or unfruitful, most of the gods known for proved impostors, the human spirit sought means of salvation elsewhere. Life empty or hopeless, thousands tried to drown the very fact of its existence in a ceaseless round of brutalizing pleasures, from which, however, some few shrank in sheer self-disgust. The Greek polytheism could offer no cure, its gods stood too near men, were too much sinners after man's kind. The Roman religion that once was had stereotyped itself into a formal affair, a parade of rites and ceremonies useful, if not necessary, as statutory observances connected with undertakings of state, but bearing no message to the soul in its dread communings with self. Where was a man to look?

Moribund though it may have been, Paganism as a system was not by any means dead, and with no other resources in sight many turned towards it eagerly. The superstitious elements in Græco-Roman worship grew portentously. The Greek

Mysteries spread everywhere, not now in the form of important public festivals, but as privately managed events peculiarly suited to the situation of those more immediately associated with the special occasion. Soothsaying and other magical factors in Roman religion also waxed, and multitudes were ready to place implicit faith in any charlatan who might profess to penetrate the future for them or proffer guidance by feats of necromancy, sleight of hand, or what not. Idolatry of the exceptional favored such abominable quacks. More, perhaps, than to either the ancient Mysteries or the old Divination, the populace rushed to cults that breathed of strangeness or mystery. One of the most remarkable features of this pagan reaction was the marvellous growth of converts to the Eastern faiths, especially to those of Egypt. If the Greek gods had been too like men, and if their free, joyous life consorted but ill with a period of universal melancholy, no such backslidings could be charged upon Isis. Gloomy, mysterious, and wondrously effective in her supposed interpositions, her sombre temples, redolent of a revelation consecrated and expanded to portentous proportions by its antiquity, attracted numberless adherents. Belief in the wonderful and improbable, so bounteously fed by the warm-blooded oriental faiths, with their unrestrained imaginings, exercised most potent sway. If the records run true, there was scarce a licentious excess, an absurd or brutalizing ceremony, a ludicrous supposition to which men would not fly in their desperate desire to find some rock whereon they might perchance plant firm feet. Omens, too, took out a new lease of life, dreams became so charged with significance as to demand detailed interpretation, prodigies flourished

in unparalleled profusion. While, if by such means a man deemed himself brought nearer the supposed divine nature, he would beat, starve, drink, mutilate, or physically exhaust himself—often in nameless ways—into a hell-begotten kingdom of heaven. "First come aimless movements and weary hurrying to and fro, and anxious unsanctified wanderings through a certain obscurity. Then before the initiation itself, all manner of hardship, horror and trembling, sweat and astonishment. After this a wondrous light breaks upon them, or they are received in delightful places and meadows, full of voices, choirs, and reverent, holy songs and sights. Through these the now initiated neophyte goes his way, released and at liberty; and, crowned with flowers, holds festival in company with pure and holy men, gazing here over the uninitiated multitude of the living, crushed and trodden down by one another in deep mire and fog, and clinging to the good things of their world in fear of death, amid misery and unbelief." Never had humanity been so swept and garnished spiritually, never had it been so completely possessed of seven, or seventy, devils worse than the first.

But all such vague enthusiasms, with their pitiful endeavors to achieve spiritual ends by unspiritual means, are destined, no matter when or where, to result in momentary elevation succeeded by depression far more lengthened than that from which they seductively promise escape. And amid all this excess—"In all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious," as St. Paul has it—another and even more significant trait was making its presence felt. Outer joy there may have been among the discordant trumpetings of many religions, inner craving there was, the more subtle and diffused that re-

ligion itself was lacking. When, in moments of serious reflection, men came to examine themselves, their doubts had the better of their variegated superstitions, and a sense of defect, naturally accompanied by a craving for effective deliverance, began to extend. With this, a truer insight into the implications of the entire contemporary situation asserted itself here and there. The Eastern religions, superstitious and debasing, licentious and degrading though they were, combined to procure one principal result. They obviated the danger so threatening under a vast material organization like an empire ruled by a people whose temperament rendered their kingdom essentially of this world. In these circumstances, hold upon the spiritual might easily have slipped quite away. The oriental faiths served to remind the imperial Romans of that unseen and eternal universe as yet unconquered by them, and not to be taken by force of arms. This revivified conviction, backed by a sense of shortcoming, never far from finer spirits, originated a longing for deliverance, for salvation. The reality of the inner life and its ubiquitousness were preached, often fantastically enough, by the imaginative orientals; while, as a force operating in the same direction, the examination of self—moral "stock-taking"—grew out of the soul-scrutiny which some of the philosophical systems involved. The latter was the more important movement, because incomparably the more formative, definite, and sure of itself. Driven back upon his own individuality, the citizen whose vocation had passed away turned to criticise himself, and in the inner life he at length lighted upon that unending conflict of the soul, the struggle between what a man is and what he would fain become. "We must seek out some

noble man whom to have continually before our eyes, so that we live as if he regarded us, and always act as if he saw the action." "Keep one in your heart to honor him with a reverence that can sanctify your inmost being." But the "noble man" and the "one" could not be discovered in the flesh; the ideal to be pursued remained an ideal—a mere verbal formula without living exemplification. Broadly, then, two contrasted spiritual states coexisted in this seething multitude. The masses were chiefly given over to grossest superstition; the reflective, highly educated, and spiritually-minded, when they were not scoffers, experienced the inextricable difficulties peculiar to the apocalyptic condition of the time, and sought to withdraw into self so that, by leaving the sensuous behind, they might be free to think out the requisite plan of salvation. The former were turned to higher thoughts when they happened to adopt the religion of the Jews from among the many competing faiths, and so were led to learn something of an unseen deity, whose image could not be made with hands. The latter reached their most elevated levels in the teaching of the Stoics, who, indeed, were the true ministers of religion at the moment. Such formative hope as there happened to be thus concentrated upon the Dispersion and the Stoa. These supplied the only sources whence relative satisfaction could be distilled.

The Jews of the Dispersion not only revealed some positive and higher doctrines to a superstitious and bewildered world, but they also prepared the way for the reception of the Gospel with conspicuous success. Nearly a century and a half before Christ, Jewish colonies had been planted all over Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt, whence they eventually spread to Rome herself.

These communities, favored by successive monarchs, made wonderful material strides, and in Alexandria we find the Jews forming a large proportion of the population and controlling important trades, such as the traffic in wheat with Rome. Owing to their homogeneity and devotion to their peculiar customs, with a resultant capacity for rendering themselves obnoxious, the authorities were little willing to seek conflict with them, and so, in process of time, they came to acquire certain privileges, greatly to the disgust of their pagan fellow-subjects, by whom they were feared, misunderstood, and hated. For example, they were not required to worship the emperor, nor to serve in the armies; and in the government distributions of grain and oil the right to receive the money value of their share of the "unclean" commodities had been conceded them. The impression they had thus contrived to make upon the authorities told on the other side with the masses. Instead of looking back to half-dead customs, the Jews kept their eyes upon the future; much of their extraordinary racial energy and clannishness was traceable to their hope that a glorious age, wherein they were to figure as leading actors, was destined soon to dawn. Coupled with this, and exercising influence of a similar kind, was their wholly justifiable conviction of their moral superiority, to which St. Paul bears such unmistakable witness: "But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge

and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" The unity of observances and of effort that characterized all Jewish doings could not fail to convince some at least of the validity of these pretensions, while, of course, it aroused opposition or contempt amongst others, principally the cultured, well-born, or sceptical. Yet the essential superiority of the Jews lay, not merely in themselves, but in the conditions so eminently characteristic of the age. As against the numerous petty deities of the pagan pantheon, they possessed the prophetic conception of Jehovah—one sublime god, invisible, because spiritual, moral, righteous, far removed from the mire where foolish humanity struggled. This, together with their immemorial Messianic expectation, lent their religion a motive force such as none of its competitors enjoyed. Moreover, through the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, all men could familiarize themselves with these inspiriting conceptions, or could obtain competent instruction and sober withal, concerning them at a synagogue. Thus it happened that the Jews made many proselytes, some of whom themselves became "strict" Jews, in so far as legal strictness applied at a distance from ecclesiastical Jerusalem, and under the wear and tear of pagan surroundings; while others gave an undertaking to maintain a benevolent neutrality toward Hebrew usages and faith. In Rome, a microcosm of the Empire, this proselytizing proved eminently successful, and penetrated even to the *entourage* of the sovereign. The new conception of Moses as the Saviour, emanating from Alexandria, also attracted some who longed for a concrete mediation. Indeed, so marked was the propaganda, that it is conceivable, had persecution not lifted

its baleful head, Judaism might have become the most influential among the many faiths competing for supremacy throughout the Empire.

But persecution came, in the reign of Caligula, and, as in the past, the Jews once more fell back upon the national ideal. Their extraordinary bitterness toward Christianity, and their insistence upon observance of the Law, which at once differentiated them in the eyes of the masses from the Galilean sect, were natural accompaniments of the disturbance created by this interference. So, of its own accord, the Jewish faith abandoned its opportunity, but not until it had cleared the path for its successor. It had familiarized many with some Christian conceptions, had generated an enthusiasm which, with but slight immediate changes of standpoint, could be enlisted by the Christian propaganda. Like Judaism, Christianity preached one holy God; it harbored at this time a similar apocalyptic view of the future; and it turned upon a concrete ideal, not more or less problematic, like the Messianic expectation, but realized here and now in the life of Jesus. The prophecy of Haggai seemed to be destined to immediate fulfilment: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desirable things of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." Furthermore, the abrogation of the obnoxious Law, the cancelling of all particularism, and the extension of equal privileges to the Gentiles lent Christianity an attractiveness in pagan eyes such as Judaism could

never exercise, an attraction, too, which it tended to forego more and more, subsequent to the persecutions of the first century. Thus the Dispersion paved a way for the Gospel. Men had been here taught what a religion involved; they had glimmerings of something sufficing to the personal needs of each, and the doctrine of one god, towards which heathenism was involuntarily moving, had been fervently enforced. But these alluring elements had hitherto been offered under restrictions. Christianity further enlivened them with its universalism, and as this quality harmonized with a leading political principle of the age, and had received embodiment in legal enactments, the new religion entered upon the field, which the older had so far cleared, with an initial momentum strangely prepared for it through the ages, and as strangely made over as a free gift now. The Hellenized Jews presented humanity with a living faith and a real religion shorn of some of the excrescences—as they seemed to the Græco-Roman world—peculiar to Palestinian Judaism; it only remained for Christianity to complete the liberation of the spirit from the remanent literalism and formalism, to vivify worship by pointing to the accomplished work and regenerating personality of the Mediator. In their freedom from artificial accidentals, in their euthusiasm for a living Saviour, in their appreciation of the infinite worth of man's spirit, the Christians entered upon the partial Jewish conquest certain of final and universal victory. "The secret of the rapid spread of Christianity is not, as has so often been said, the unity of the Roman Empire, but the pervading presence of the Jewish nation, whose ramifications spread over both the great empires of the world, the Roman and the Parthian."

If the constructive work of the Dispersion prepared masses—social groups—for the reception of Christianity, a similar office was performed for individuals by the Stoics, who especially appealed to men of culture and moral intensity. When Stoicism came into contact with Roman character, it found itself exposed to influences that eventually altered its scope. The point of central interest ceased to be nature, or logic, or the relation of a man to the universal reason. The leading exponents of the school concentrated their thought increasingly upon questions of duty, and in the provision of answers they were not ashamed to seek assistance from other, and even hostile, systems. Perhaps the most significant indication of this eclectic tendency is traceable in the view, derived from Platonism, that matter, and the body as a part of matter, cannot but be ultimately evil—they contain a bad element which no available means can expel utterly. Shut up in the body, a man is thus preordained to sin and to go on sinning. The circumstances of the Roman world proved highly favorable to the intensification of this sense of defect; and the necessity of withdrawal, of search for the good in the one place where it cannot be found—self—came to be enforced with growing earnestness. When thought was thus directed inward, another conviction began to formulate itself with the reflective mind. "We have all of us erred, some more grievously, others more lightly. . . . And not only have we transgressed, we shall stumble to the uttermost end of our life." "The human spirit is by nature perverse, and hankers after the forbidden and the perilous." Not only the body, but the very soul is the seat of an incurable disease. The self-contained individual who harbors the sole ideal of

life, must, at the last, pass condemnation upon himself. From this latest conviction rose the all-important perception of the need for salvation. God Himself must somehow come and change the soul, so as to fit it to exercise its ruling office in life. The need which Christianity alone could supply was here finally discovered, and the sorrow, sadness, hopelessness of the last great Stoics had found end even while they were meditating on its cause. One soul *had* overcome self and the world; and the message rang out, Be ye as He was. This was the Gospel already prepared to fill the vacuum which the Stoics, inexorably driven from point to point by their thought, were so clearly creating. "Why look to these philosophers for healing, who are sick themselves; shall we wait till Socrates knows something, or till Anaxagoras finds light in darkness, or till Democritus pulls truth out of the well, or till Epicurus widens the path of his soul, or till Arcesilaus and Carneades see, feel, and perceive? *Ecce vox de cœlo veritatem docens.*" Reply was to be given with no uncertain sound, yet from most unexpected quarters. The babes and sucklings were soon to come to their own.

The preparation of the spirit was now complete. Alike in its negative and in its positive elements, the whole age was big with needs, with problems, with longings; and satisfaction lagged or failed even in the most likely places. Upon such a universe Christianity burst, taking up the good elements to itself, transforming them to higher purposes, and, above all, revivifying life by pointing to a practicable ideal, to a way of salvation that had been already trodden by a Man of Sorrows. Superstition was justified and condemned by the conception of God the Father; magic, necromancy, and soothsaying were ex-

plained away by the operation of God the Holy Spirit; sin lost its terrors, and came to be viewed as the seed of a transformed life in the light of the career and office of Christ the Son. The Divine and the Human natures at length stood forth clearly linked in their essential spiritual unity, and the very defects of manhood were seen to be filled to overflowing with the opportunities of a salvation which was already complete in and through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

"Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

THE flood of preparation for Christianity flows steadily down the ages in three main streams—the Greek, ever bearing on its sparkling surface the one burden, the humane character of man; the Jewish, gradually becoming clearer, till it mirrors the nature of the one true God, then losing itself amid the rocks of formalism, anon bursting its home banks and overflowing with fertilizing influence into many far off lands; the Roman, swamping a world in its majestic current, then exhausting itself in the endless eddies caused by the junction of innumerable tributaries.

The problem of Greek civilization was the problem of man's freedom—self-dependence, and self-determination constituted its watchwords. In the palmy days, citizens of no mean city found opportunities and to spare for the realization of the most balanced manhood then conceivable. Obligation to serve the state and to suppress self in this ministry they deemed liberty, because thus, and only thus, could the highest qualities of the human being they knew grow to perfection. But at a later date positions shifted. Service of an alien monarch, dowered with none of the returns familiar to the freeman of the Periclean age, betrayed the true nature of the once vaunted citizenship—necessity—and so freedom seemed to be obtainable, not in, but rather despite,

society. Thus by slow steps the Greek was forced to bear the burden of personality, to probe its infinite demands, and to learn somewhat its inherent inability to satisfy itself. Yet, in the process, he garnered conclusions which are among the undying possessions to be transmitted from generation to generation for ever. He laid strong hold upon the ultimate need for self-development and, although he only descried the ideal very far off, and through the uncertain haze of his own atmosphere, he schooled himself to know that, except by faith in a moral consummation, no man could rise to relative perfection of character. Accordingly, his it was to encounter evils and shatterings of his dearest desire, but of sin and its root in the perversity of the human heart he remained wholly ignorant. Self interposed between him and that sacrifice wherein weakness perfects strength. Courage, steadfastness, and the justice born of civic patriotism he represented with unerring wisdom, nay, lived out in his best days. To self-abasement, chastity, meekness, and the merits of a service of all, he was destined ever to be an utter stranger. The mere suggestion of dying for a barbarian or for a slave would have savored to him, not so much of bad morals, as of ill-regulated manners. Such conceptions did not fall anywhere within his horizon. So, when his turn to share the doom of barbarian and slave arrived, when he was relegated to the position of paid teacher to the Roman Empire, he knew neither how to save himself nor whither to turn for sorely needed consolation. The problem of freedom became the problem of personality; and as the civic solution of the one had impaired the conception of the other, the unrestful rest of hopelessness fell to him as final lot.

The Jew began where the Greek ended. If Stoicism closed with the conviction that evils were unavoidably incident to the very constitution of the soul, the Jews started from the belief that man was no creator save in his indubitable power to produce sin. If Greek polytheism tended at the last towards a shadowy monotheism, the Jew built his hope upon the one personal and ethical God. Hence his entire outlook upon life could not but be different. Neither distinctively artistic, nor intellectual, nor civic, he was preëminently religious. Spiritual insight was his pearl of great price. Yet he reserved this treasure for himself, and necessarily so. Had he not surrounded it with the triple brass of race, nationality, and custom, it would certainly have been besmirched, nay, it might have been lost to humanity irrevocably. And the more he was forced to struggle, the sterner the hardships and misfortunes he was called upon to endure, the more, under Providence, he unconsciously provided for its preservation. Thus he stored up intensity, and a marvellous grasp upon the spiritual grew with him, projecting him into that inexhaustible treasure-house, the future, wherein his principate was preserved, destined to a glorious realization, as he thought. Hence, when driven from the homeland, or attracted elsewhere, he carried with him a veritable revelation to less favored races. The one God after whom they blindly groped he could set forth; the conception of solidarity among men, to which their selecter spirits were slowly moving, he had long since exemplified in the close-knit unity of his people; above all, he had something to live for—life interested him and sufficed him, not as a thing merely to be analyzed or used, not as a mystery before which to stand abashed or to grovel superstitiously, but

as a means tending to a mighty consummation reserved for a future infinitely more vital than even the most sanctified past. Yet, although well able to satisfy pagan cravings, he withheld his gifts, or so burdened them with conditions as to bar their ready acceptance. For the Jew, the precious teaching was ever associated with national heritage, often with temporary or accidental accompaniments. Circumcision must needs seal the spiritual change, submission to the rules of the Law must needs signify and maintain it. So other monotheistic cults, such as those of Isis and Mithra, seduced his proselytes, or they were left standing at the gate, permitted to view the elect, but not bidden to be of them. The generosity that breeds enthusiasm lingered far off; in the nature of things humanity could not so narrow itself as to become a single nation, even with participation in so great benefits as prospective reward.

The Roman's chiefest gift was unbending devotion to duty. He never wearied of, was ever instant in, well-doing. Yet this very strength brought his weakness into prominence. His well-doing savored too often of cruelty and ruthlessness. And, when he came to his kingdom, material domination limited his horizon overmuch. Nevertheless, he forced men into one polity, while circumstances helped him to render them of one tongue and, to an exceptional extent, of one culture. In performing these tasks, he levelled material barriers and so caused many nations to commune with one another. The very vastness of the field wherein his legal system held sway drew attention to the rights of men as human beings, and associated this natural claim with a depth of sanction and width of application that placed it on a par with physical

law. But just as his overt actions tended thus to enhance the importance of the individual, they also operated so as to loosen social bonds. All were bidden to put off nationality, and so to each his own selfhood grew more and more engrossing. Universal toleration eviscerated faiths once firmly established in the affections of smaller but more homogeneous groups and, by permitting unrestricted freedom, blotted out the significance of any one choice. Roman materialism, or realism, bred superstition among the masses, indifference among the classes, and otiose ideals among all. Those who, driven back upon self, experienced the dire necessity for salvation, always thought of a change limited to the single soul, and excluded the idea of widespread participation. And just as the Empire became the place of humanity without men, so Stoicism took to itself a doctrine of mediation without providing any mediator. Lifeless or inverted or amorphous ideals thus became the last resort of Græco-Roman culture. Powerless power set itself down upon the human heart; atrophy attacked the spiritual eye; the colossal masqueraded as the imperishable. Meanwhile, the one imperishable work of God, man's mysteriously double nature, had starvation as its portion. All old things were passing away; the religious and moral worlds awaited renewal.

Christ and His work entered upon this materially splendid, spiritually bankrupt heritage. Good will towards men was preached as the basis of a fresh interpretation of human nature, and especially of an insight into its intrinsically infinite worth. Amid universal misconception and intolerance, the Gospel steadily stepped to supremacy by its inward superiority, by its fidelity to divine and human nature, above all, by the

accomplishment in Christ of everything that a man ought to become in order to attain the dignity of true manhood. The ancient world, in each of its main life-streams, had been slowly but inevitably precipitating itself upon the most gigantic crisis that history has ever seen. Christ removed the central cause and, in cancelling it, redeemed the human race, not only from its former follies and misconceptions, but from a repetition of them, if at any time it will but hearken to His voice. The wisdom of Jesus revealed depths hidden from the Greek sage and perceived but dimly even by the Jewish prophet; His kingdom bore the stamp of a universality which that of Rome served but to foreshadow, and this in a half-world; His doctrine found final justification in His life as the highest and best possible for a human being; His revelation left nothing still to be revealed. And when we tend to doubt Him as, pressed by unfamiliar circumstances, we still sometimes do, we have but to turn back to the Preparation to see there our own situation and its inevitable consequences. Sometimes, in access of knowledge, we would win salvation by reason; if so, the despair of the Greek awaits us. Sometimes, elated by sense of work well done, we deem ourselves of the elect; then let us con the fate of the Jew. Most often, in our newly acquired dominion over the earth's forces, we tend to see in nature and mechanical cause adequate explanation of spiritual life; here we have the end of the old Roman world—power without insight—for our teacher. We may not, because we cannot, go beyond Christ's own statement of the meaning to be attached to past history and to present opportunity: "All that which the Father giveth

me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out."

The value of careful study of the Preparation for Christianity is to be sought most of all in the opportunities it affords us of clearly realizing the demands made upon Christ, the nature of His response, and its incomparable adequacy. Familiar with all these, what must our ultimate judgment be? This: "The Lord so ordained it that we should come to Jesus as to a great and good man, becoming infected with His spirit and imbued with love of Him as of a mortal being; and then, when He had caught our hearts as it were by guile, so that He had made Himself now needful unto us even as the very breath of our lives, then began He to say unto us, 'Whom say ye that I, the Son of man, am?' And lo, trying our hearts, we began to perceive that this same Son of man, who had so given life to our souls, could be none other than the very Son of the living God."

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Kant set himself to solve in the several divisions of the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' and to keep his bearings through the complicated discussion. The chief value of the 'Outline' lies in the fact that Prof. Wenley conceives and states Kant's problems and solutions independently of Kant's formidable terminology."—*Post-Graduate Quarterly.*

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